

# The Cure for Doubt

by Shane Idleman

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*The sermon emphasizes that doubt is a natural part of faith, and encourages believers to bring their questions to God while remembering His past faithfulness.*

**Duration:** 44:02

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 11:28-30, Luke 5:32, James 4:6, Revelation 2:4

**Topics:** "Repentance And Faith", "Finding True Rest"

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## Description

This sermon from Matthew chapter 11 emphasizes the importance of repentance, humility, and surrendering to God. Jesus rebukes cities for rejecting Him despite witnessing His miracles, highlighting the accountability for rejecting the gospel. He offers rest to those burdened, calling them to come to Him and find peace by taking His yoke. The message stresses the need for repentance, humility, and trusting in Jesus to find true rest and relief from life's burdens.

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## Transcript

Matthew chapter 11, if you have your Bibles, you can turn to Matthew chapter 11. And I want to encourage you, like I did the first service, to just let the Word of God speak to you tonight. I think a lot of times, especially as Christians, myself included, we can read the Bible, right? And it's kind of like, in one ear and out the next, what's for dinner, how long is this going to be? I don't really like that worship tonight, it's too emotional.

You know, we get all these things in our minds. I just want to encourage you, I know we're missing a lot of families with Thanksgiving being gone, or people being out of town being gone. But I just want to encourage you to let the Word of God speak to you in many different ways.

Maybe through what I'm saying, or even as I'm reading these certain points, and really leave your edified and built up. And I'm going to actually start in chapter 10, verse 40, where we left off last week. Jesus says, he who receives you, receives me, and he who receives me, receives him who sent me.

He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.

So we're not going to spend a lot of time there. But what God's basically saying is God rewards a giving heart. God will reward a giving heart.

And we desperately need to see that with Christmas coming up, right? We're so focused on giving and amassing all this stuff. And I've got 4000 socks and shirts, and we just amassing and God saying, listen, if you God rewards a giving heart, but he resists the proud and the selfish. Isn't it interesting how pride and selfishness go together? You rarely will see a humble, selfish person, right? You just don't see that.

And God says, I resist the proud, but I give grace to the humble. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. And then he goes right into chapter 11, Jesus speaking.

Now it came to Matthew recording what Jesus is going to speak. Now it came to pass when Jesus finished commanding his 12 disciples that he departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John, this is John the Baptist, had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to, and they said to him, are you the coming one, or do we look for another? So picture this, John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, he came and brought the message of repentance.

He was preparing the way of Jesus. And now he ends up in prison. What happened to this great kingdom? What happened to all this new kingdom that you're going to bring, that you're going to overcome the Romans? What happened to this? So he's saying, art thou the Christ, or shall we look for another? What's going on here, Jesus? And it reminded me as I was studying this that it's okay to ask God about our doubts.

It's okay to bring your doubts and your fears to God. It's okay to bring your questions to God. Do you know I still have a lot of questions? I can't understand salvation 100%.

I know that God's sovereign, but man's responsible for his actions. Both are true. But it's hard to understand how exactly do those work in this finite mind.

Lord, I don't understand. I realize the people who reject you and end up in hell, but I don't fully understand that. Lord, I have questions about certain things.

Why did you take this person and leave this one? And God says, listen, bring your questions to me. Bring your doubts to me. It's okay to question.

It's okay to doubt. But here's the key. Does your questioning turn you toward God or away from him? Because didn't the devil say, did God really say? When he tempted Eve, did God really say? And I was reminded of this earlier this week when I was studying about this, I was reminded of something called the emergent church movement that I kind of spoke out against about a decade ago.

And these guys would come in and they would say, what about if the virgin birth isn't really true? I mean, is that a big deal? I mean, come on. You know, if it's like a trampoline, you just take out one of the springs, you can keep bouncing, right? I mean, is it that big a deal? And they would come in and say, what about if there's really no hell? You know, what about if love wins and there's no hell and there's no this? And they bring all these subtleties in these questions because a heretical person can't just come in and say, hey, I'm a false teacher. They bring questions.

They start with, yeah, yeah, I'm on your side. Yeah, what do you think about that? And they start to question. That's not a good questioning because that's questioning with the intent to lead other people

astray.

But God says, if you bring me your questions, if you bring me your concerns and you truly want to seek me, you will find me. You might not have all your questions answered, but you'll have peace knowing that I hold the world together. So it's okay if you have doubts, that's okay.

There's not a month that goes by that I'm like, oh, I don't understand that. Lord, help me. As you read scripture, you know, a lot of times in the Old Testament, you're like, oh, man, I don't understand that.

But Lord, help me, show me. So it's okay, because John was looking, art thou the Christ or shall we look for another? I'm locked up. This is not going as I planned.

And what happens in the midst of a storm, that's where doubt comes in, right? As soon as life throws us a curve ball, I was waiting for the fast pitch. What's this curve ball? And it hits me. This is not what I expected.

So it's okay, I just wanna encourage you, because a lot of times I think we beat ourselves up when we have doubt and we question. You know, I know that's not right. And well, it is, I think it can be form of temptation too, because we don't wanna be, Christians shouldn't be doubting all the time and questioning and have this critical kind of spirit and oh, woe is me and I just don't.

But there are seasons in life where you'll doubt and when you'll have questions, God says, listen, bring them to me. Isaiah 1a, come, let us reason together. Lord said, come, let us reason together.

Ask of me. What about James 1.5? He who asks for wisdom will find it. Ask and I will show you the way.

Verse four, Jesus answered and said to them, go and tell John the things which you hear and see. The blind see, the lame walk, the leopards are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them and blessed is he who is not offended because of me. So Jesus is saying, listen, go show John the fruit of this ministry.

Blind eyes are being opened, deaf ears are being opened, the dead are being raised from the dead. Look at what is happening. And this also reminds us to look at the fruit of Christianity.

Name, just give me one hospital that an atheist has built. You might be able to find one, I don't know. Or a great outreach program.

Or a great working with the poor. Or restructuring this or giving their lives for this. Christianity has made large scale changes because it first changed the hearts of men and women.

You look at the fruit from missions to hospitals to being on the front lines and going and helping those with Ebola in some cases and going to the poor and the destitute and giving of themselves. Where's that fruit from? That fruit's from a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. There's fruit there.

And so I thought about this as well. What is the fruit of your life? That's a healthy question to ask every now and then. If I'm going through life and there's no fruit, yeah, I go to church, I have a Bible on the counter and there's no fruit.

God wants us to reconcile that and begin producing fruit in our life. Go and look, look at the blind see, the lame walk, the leopards cleanse and the deaf hear. Look at everything that God has been doing.

And this, I believe, is one of the cures for doubt is to remember what God has done. It's almost as God was saying, and I wrote this down all in succession. When you were blind and lame, I opened your spiritual eyes.

Remember when I cleansed you from your sin, redeemed you and paid the price. Remember when your dead, cold and callous heart was resurrected. Remember when I led you through the darkest days of your life.

Remember when I held you in the way that the world came crushing down. Remember, and if we go back and remember, I've never met a Christian that says, well, God's never done anything for me. They usually say, he saved me from that car accident.

He saved me from killing myself. He saved me when I did this. He saved me.

He was there with me through the storm. And now we're going through a difficult season, we forget. And God says, remember, remember.

Remember who I am. Don't look at right now what you're going through. Remember.

That's a huge cure for doubt. You start to remember his faithfulness and how he holds the world together. And it's ironic, I've done this many times before.

It's hard to do, but if you can get couples who are fighting to spend a few hours just remembering when they first met, remembering that first date, that song, that concert, that whatever. Remember, yeah, remember that. Remember when you fell in love.

Remember when you couldn't wait to see the other person. You had to check your email. You couldn't wait to get off work and call.

And I was like, I don't want to talk to them anymore. What happened? Love doesn't leave. Love doesn't go anywhere.

You leave love. It's still right there, but you leave and I leave. So if you can all remember, that's right.

Remember how I treated you. Remember those flowers. Remember this.

Remember the respect and the honor. Remember all those things. Go back to that point because that's genuine, that's real.

And the same thing in our walk. If you can remember what God brought you through. Remember how he delivered you.

Remember how he saved you. Jesus actually had the strongest rebukes in the New Testament church to those who do not remember. Jesus said, you do all these works, that's wonderful, but you've left your first love.

Remember from where you have fallen and return and repent and return and repent. That's very healthy. That's a cure for doubt.

Remember. I don't know about you, but I started to remember. Oh man, when God first called me and just going through hell, but still just weeping during worship and saying, Lord, you saved me.

I should have been dead. I should have been buried in Lancaster. I should be on my fifth marriage.

I should be in jail. I should be incarcerated. Lord, you kept my mind together and you start to remember everything he did and you did that and you opened that door and you opened that financial need and you got me through that and you start to remember.

It's hard for doubt to stay in that kind of environment because you're doing what the Bible says. Finally, brethren, whatever things are pure and noble and right and just and good, meditate on them. See, if the enemy can get your mind, he's got you.

This is where the battlefield is. When the scripture says no temptation has overtaken you, but what is common to man, but God who will make the way of escape that you may be able to bear it. Don't just think that it's an exit door.

It's an exit door up here. Allowing our mind to remember how good God is in the things of God. Jesus said, go tell John the fruit that you see.

Here's why. Fruit reveals what seeds were planted and wise decisions can be seen in what is produced. Later, Jesus will say that wisdom is justified by her children.

In other words, look at the children that are produced. Look at what the fruit is of your lifestyle. Is that fruit something that's God honoring or is it the fruit that the enemy likes? It's not hard to say wisdom is shown to be right by what results from it.

So we don't have to argue about wisdom. Just look at what's resulting. It's funny, right? Especially teenagers.

They think they know it all. I was one. I thought I knew it all.

And my life is falling apart. This would apply, right? Listen, wisdom is justified by her children. There's no wisdom in your life.

There's foolishness. This is the fruit of foolishness. So that's what he's saying here.

Just look. Look at the fruit of what's happening here. And really it has to do with perseverance on this note.

Doesn't it? The Christian life is about perseverance. And Catherine Booth, who I believe is her husband or maybe her dad who started the Salvation Army, she said, you may suffer, you may bleed, and you may break, but you shall go on. Wow, that's a good motto.

If you can remember that. Because we do the opposite, right? I'm not gonna suffer. I'm not gonna bleed.

Lord knows I'm not gonna break. And so we don't go on. Because when these things happen and life throws us a curve ball, we get out of the way.

If you weren't here for that message, does God have a wonderful plan for our life? I would encourage you to view that because I talk a lot more about that in that message. And then he goes on to say, as they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, what did you go out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? In other words, they had this perception of John. Well, who is he? I mean, this guy that soft garments and like

this rich king and royalty and Jesus is challenging him.

Well, what did you go out to see? What did you think was gonna happen? What did you perceive? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you in more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you.

And Jesus is basically saying, what did you expect? What did you expect? Did you expect John to be exalted and not imprisoned? Did you expect ministry to be easy and carefree? Did you expect the Christian life to be this glamorous type of religion? What did you expect? Say, why is he in prison? Why is he eating locusts and wild honey? Why is this wild man saying, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand? What did you expect? He's a prophet of God. What's a prophet of God supposed to say? Coddle you in your sin? He came on the scene saying, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus is coming.

I'm the forerunner of the Messiah. In a humble state, in a prison, is where he ended up for speaking the truth. Interesting note, realistic expectation is also a cure for doubt.

Realistic expectations. We should have realistic expectations of the Christian faith. Well, how do you get that? Right here.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, right? I will fear no evil. Not by might, not by power, but my spirit saith the Lord. And it goes on and on.

When people come into Christianity with unrealistic expectations, and when their expectations fall apart, doubt comes in. Ah, see, I knew it, I knew it. This God, he can't keep six billion people together.

He can't watch over everything. And we go, just like marriage, right? We'll go back on that theme for a minute. Those who enter into marriage with unrealistic expectations, right, this is the step on your toes sermon, right? Go in there.

Morgan thinks I'm gonna have dinner ready every night. Have the trash out, the house vacuumed. Come in smiles.

Can I rub your shoulder for 15 minutes? What else do you need me to do? I need a big, long honey to-do list every single day. Oh, this is gonna be wonderful. Right? And then, man, reality hits.

This is not what I expected. I'm bellin' out. I'm gone.

Now, I'm not discounting severe emotional trauma and abuse and things like that. I know you understand that, right? But I am saying that the majority of people go into marriage, right? I'm so excited, I can't wait. And then three months later, it's like, what in the world is this? It's because you take two selfish people, sinners who are looking out for their best interests, and you have them live together.

It's not, unless some humility takes place, unless the fruit of the Spirit takes place, what happens? We become discouraged. We begin to doubt. Was this really of God? Are we in His will? Doubt comes in.

Why? Unrealistic expectations. That works in a strong way there. And I also thought it was interesting, this is just a side note, that it's interesting that Jesus built up John the Baptist's ministry.

I know a lot of people that would've pulled him down. Yeah, he's in prison. See where it got him? I'm the new man on the scene.

Look at, yeah, I know, he did that. But Jesus never did that. He always built up John's ministry.

He built up others' ministry. Others' ministry, Shane, come on. No, think about it.

When they came to him and they said, hey, we ran into some people that are casting out demons in your name. We rebuked them. Jesus said, why'd you do that? Whoever is not against us is for us.

Building up, and I've seen this in the body of Christ a lot. I'm concerned that many are contending for the faith with a contentious attitude. And you know why I can say that? Because guilty as charged.

I've done that before, right? Unless they fit exactly in my bubble, they're wrong. And I'm gonna pull them down. That church on Avenue M and that church on Avenue J and that church on Avenue I and that church on the east side and that church over there.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, this is a real church. And we just tear down, tear down, tear down. And I think we just need to be careful when we use those terms like false prophet or heretic because a false teacher is not even a Christian.

They're false. They're not even a believer. So we have people that might not be, we might not agree with them, but it's non-essentials.

And we can develop a callous, cold, critical heart. I know, I've went through that phase. I've talked about it before, so I'm not gonna do that again.

But I just had a side note here that Jesus built up. This doesn't mean we overlook error, but it does mean we come in with the right humble heart and say, Lord, we shouldn't be excited about tearing people down. That's the bottom line.

I mean, there's some people like this. I can't wait to blog tomorrow, right? I'm gonna tear such and such apart. I can't wait.

That's not a good attitude to have. That's a critical heart. So we have to be careful in this area.

And then he goes on to say, oh, actually God, I wanna talk about James 4, 6. God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. On this note, it's interesting. I just finished a book written by, many of you know who Leonard Ravenhill is, right? His son David wrote a book entitled Surviving the Anointing.

And it's a really good read. Talks about how many people in ministry don't make it through to retire because it's hard to survive the anointing. And there's this guy who was known for, just a well-known speaker.

And he went into the city and these pastors said, man, there's some principality over this city. We can feel the darkness. We can feel the weight.

Nothing's being accomplished. Nobody's getting saved. We feel this principality.

What do you think it is? And he goes, I know what it is. He said, you do? He goes, yeah, I know what the principality is. What is it? We gotta cast this thing out.

We've gotta get rid of this. And he said, it's Yahweh. And they said, that's God.

And he said, yeah, God is resisting you because of your proud, arrogant hearts. The church is not united. The church is divided.

All the church is bickering and complaining. Who's better, putting each other down. God is against you.

God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. And I thought about that. It is so right because unity in the body of Christ is way more important than we think.

We think it's like, I'll try if I can. But Jesus said, you'll actually know that we are disciples in this valley by our love for one another, not by how well we put each other down. And Jesus said, Father, I pray.

When Jesus prays, you better sit up straight and listen. I pray that they be one, just as you and I are one. Jesus prayed for unity.

And a lot of times we're fighting the very thing he prayed for. We wonder, why is my ministry not growing? Why am I so negative? Why am I going through this? Why does life stink? It's because we're resisting God through pride and arrogance. I mean, God will take a man and woman, he'll put them down, he'll abase them until they learn to humble themselves, and then he'll rebuild them.

He'll resist ministry. He'll resist anything we try to do if we're not humble and gracious and working towards unity. Not perfectly.

I'll probably fell in this area next week, right? That church down the street, they water down the gospel. They're so weak. And then I get caught up in that gossip, right? And then they say things about this church.

I hear that too. Oh, that guy, Shane, he's too hardcore. How do you guys listen to that? You know? Psychologists like to pull each other apart.

Instead of saying, how can we be united? Not compromising the gospel, not negotiating truth, but allowing, because see, I'm tired of talking about unity. I'm tired of talking about it. Why don't we display it? Can we build others up, or do we have to continually pull down? I think that's one of the important points here.

Humility is also a cure for doubt. Did you realize that? Humility is also a cure for doubt. Here's why.

Doubt is a feeling of uncertainty, right? Doubt is a feeling of uncertainty that often results from resisting God. So I have this uncertainty, and I'm resisting God. Humility puts my heart in the right frame again to receive from God.

So doubt just runs for cover when a person humbles themselves. Because part of doubt is part of our sinful nature. When we're resisting God through pride and arrogance, the only way to break that is to humble ourselves.

And you'll find that so many people, they've been mad at God, upset at God. Once they humble themselves and get in right relationship with Him, the doubt and the fear and the anxiety and a lot of the things are gone. Doesn't mean we don't struggle with those things in the future, but the stronghold leaves.

Verse 11, I say to you, among those born of women, there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist. But he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you're willing to receive it, he is Elisha who is to come. And he who has ears to hear, let him hear.

There's a lot right there. I could spend a whole hour on this because this statement shocked the people. We read it, we're like, oh, it sounds good.

In-N-Out Burger or Panda Express, right? Hurry up, Shane, get through this. But these people, Jesus is saying, listen. Listen, there's nobody ever risen greater than John the Baptist.

And until now, now that John's here and now that Jesus is here, the kingdom suffers violence and the violent take it by force. There's a huge spiritual upheaval. Nothing like the world has seen before.

Now you've got Jesus Christ coming, telling demons to leave, darkness is fleeing, people are being saved, set free and delivered. There's this huge spiritual upheaval. And then he says, and this is Elisha that was to come.

Whoa, we've heard about this in the prophecy hundreds of years ago. This is Elisha? Yes, not reincarnation, but fulfillment. The same message that Elisha had was what? Repent, repent.

Wicked King Ahab, repent. And King Ahab hated him so much, he said, oh, you troubler of Israel. And they're saying the same thing now.

John, you troubler, you're gonna end up in jail. We hate this message of repentance. So Jesus just said, this is the greatest man who ever lived, locked up in jail.

This is Elisha which was to come. The kingdom suffered violence and the violent take it by force. He's saying this is everything that has been written from the prophets, right? Maybe just lump all those prophets together.

The major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and then the minor prophets, Joel and Amos and Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah. All those prophets, he said it's from the prophets until even from the law, which was the law, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, where Moses was involved. The law and all the prophets, all since the beginning of recorded biblical history till now, right now it's being fulfilled.

So they weren't just sitting there casually, they were like, are you kidding me? This is Elijah that was to come? The message of redemption, the message of hope? And then that's why he says, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. And I've noticed a lot of people keep their earplugs in, right? They don't wanna hear this, give me earplugs. Sometimes I'll see people coming with earplugs during worship, earplugs, I don't wanna hear anything.

It's okay if it's too loud, but during the message of the gospel, this message, you can't put your earplugs in. And Jesus is saying, listen, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. And that's a call out to everybody.

He's saying, listen, if you have ears to hear, let him hear, there's no excuses, because you chose to close up your ears. And it's interesting, in messages like this, they'll either pull those earplugs out or they'll get

tighter in. People say, we don't wanna hear what you're talking about.

So Jesus says, listen, if you have ears to hear, let him hear what I'm saying. And then he goes on to verse 16, but to what shall I liken this generation? He's kind of, to me, he's kind of a form of mocking, but kind of just like playing with the people. To what shall I liken this generation? In other words, they're rejecting, a lot of people are rejecting God.

Many are coming to him, but a lot of rejecting him, especially the religious leaders. So he's saying, what shall I liken this generation? It's like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to our companions and saying, we played the flute for you, and you did not dance, and we mourned for you, and you did not lament. And this is a simple story to illustrate the contrast that no matter what they did, John, Jesus, the people found excuses to reject him and his message.

And then it goes right into the application. For John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he has a demon. And then the son of man comes eating and drinking, and they say, look, a glutton and a wine bibber, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

And then Jesus says, but wisdom is justified by her children. Jesus is saying, how dare you call me a wine bibber and a glutton? He goes, the dead are being raised, the leopards are cured, the blind see, the deaf ears are opened. Go ask the widow whose son I raised from the dead.

Go ask the other guy whose daughter came up from the grave. Go ask them. Wisdom is justified by her children.

Ministry is happening all around. Lives are being changed. You guys are off base.

Just wisdom is justified by her children. And we found, and you found, and the Bible has found that those who don't like the truth always find excuses. Right? You talk to people all the time.

Yeah, but the Bible is written by men. And then you take them through about a half hour of history. They're like, okay, well, you got me on that one.

But how can a loving God send people to hell? Hell, yeah, show me that one. And then you talk about, right, separation, or holy, righteous God can't dwell with sinful man. Christ bridging that gap without that gap builder, without bridging the gap, without his righteousness.

We take on the righteousness of Christ. We are eternally separated from God. Oh, yeah, that makes sense.

Yeah, but Jesus wasn't raised from the dead. There's no way. His disciples hid the body.

And then you walk them through. Okay, so 11 of the 12 gave their lives for a lie. They were stabbed.

They were beheaded. They were cut in two. And they say, oh, yeah, but we know where we hid him.

But we're just gonna go through this severe martyrdom just because it's a lie. Of course not. You walk them through all that.

And they're like, okay, yeah, but science doesn't support the Bible. You wanna start in Genesis 1? Of course it does. It said the earth is a circle.

Well, you guys said it was flat. Circumcision on the eighth day. Doctors do that now.

Wash your hands. Blood, the life of the flesh is in the blood. You can just go scientifically accurate.

It's amazing. It's not even a book about science. They go, oh, well, you got me there.

Well, yeah, but that's your truth. That's not my truth. And then you explain how all truths can be wrong, but not all truths can be right.

Two plus two doesn't equal six, and eight, nine, 12, depending on where you live. Gravity's still gravity in Russia. Truth is truth.

And then they finally, you know, say, well, all paths lead to God. I don't care about it. And you have to remind them that all paths will lead to the judgment seat of Christ.

All paths will lead, actually, let me clarify that. All paths will lead to the great white throne judgment. You will stand before God one day to be judged.

You are correct. But all paths do not lead to heaven. There's a big difference there.

But people who don't like this will find excuses. Remember, I spoke a few years ago on, they interviewed the most brilliant minds on the planet. And they kept, where did people come from then? Well, they finally got frustrated.

They said, on the backs of crystals planted by aliens. Now, I didn't go to college, but come on, please. It's ridiculous.

But that's why, because excuses. Those who don't like the truth find excuses. And if we don't wanna apply the truth to our lives, guess what else we find? Excuses.

And it's funny, every time we go try to apply the truth to somebody, excuses. Well, here's why I don't do that. Oh, oh yeah, I didn't realize that.

Hmm. Can you show me that in Scripture? No, I can't show you that in Scripture. And we just want, so I would just encourage you to get back in that place of humility and believe in God and what he says and obeying the word of God.

That's how you begin to remove doubt and fear and anxiety and problems, is to obey the word of God and to exercise that truth again. And then Jesus goes on to say, then he began to rebuke the cities. Jesus rebuked the cities? You would know that reading some news outlets, right? Nice, quiet, turn the other cheek, this great teacher, just sat around and smiled to everybody and you've got Son of God movies coming out.

Oh, look, he's just such a nice guy. But he rebuked entire cities, why? Because they denounced him, they saw his mighty works and they still rejected him. Let me read the Scripture.

Then he began to rebuke the cities in which most of his mighty works had been done because they did not repent. Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works which were done in you have been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and in ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

Isn't that interesting? Jesus walks into the whole city. Woe to you, Lancaster, woe to you, Palmdale, if the good works that were done in you were done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. He's saying, you saw the good works of God, you saw the healing, you saw the miracles, you saw the deliverance, you saw everything, yet you still reject him.

There'll be a stronger judgment. You say, Chorazin, Bethesda, I walked within your parameters. I raised the dead, what more do you want? Yet you still reject me.

It'll be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, you remember Sodom and Gomorrah, than for you in the day of judgment. Why, because they just ignored the inner alarm clock of the Holy Spirit, convicting them, convicting them. These cities, not only did they ignore that conviction, they ignored the word of God, then the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And we behold the presence of the only begotten of the Father full of mercy and grace and truth. They saw his works, they saw everything, and they still rejected him. Same thing happens today, we can tell people, listen, you hear the word of God, you hear preaching, you're going against the conviction of your own spirit, and even the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen so that people are without excuse, they have no excuse.

So that's Jesus for you, folks. He rebuked entire cities because he loved them. And he said, listen, there'll be a stricter judgment, verse 24, verse 23, and you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, you will be brought down to Hades, for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

But I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you. And I don't quite understand a lot of this, obviously there's, I don't know if phases is the right word, but there's a more severe judgment on some groups for rejecting the message of the gospel, yet they had it, they saw it, and yet they still rejected it. And I mean, I think of America often, America, you are exalted to heaven, you've been brought up, but you'll be brought down.

I've blessed you in so many ways, I've nurtured you, I've guided you, I've directed you, you should be the most blessed among all nations, you've experienced a prosperity, you've experienced a sovereign hand of God, yet you're still rejecting me, you're rejecting truth and you're walking away from me. It's better for Iran and Iraq, the nations that don't even know how much I've blessed them than for you. Because those who've been forgiven much, love much, yes, but also those who've been forgiven much, or those who've been given much, it's required much.

We are held responsible for the knowledge that we possess. Lots of people say, well, do babies go to hell? What about somebody who can't understand their mentally, I'm more concerned about you, you know, you know, God's a righteous, holy, just, fair, no, fair is probably not the word, but he's a righteous, holy, just God, who I leave that up to him, he's more just than me. People reject the message of the gospel, there's a judgment for that.

And everybody's so worried about this island off the coast of this, or down in the jungles of Africa, well, stop making excuses, what about you? What about you? You're gonna be held for a stricter judgment. You've got people who can't even speak English, don't even know what airplanes are. They're seeing visions, they're coming to Christ because of missionaries and different works.

Look at us, we've got how many translations of the Bible? You've got an app for everything. I can tell you the Greek and the Hebrew and the 14 commentaries, I can tell you what Spurgeon said and John Calvin said and Wesley said, all within five minutes. And we all have that, we have that, people will be held accountable for those actions.

And this is why, folks, repentance is so important, that's why it's a mark of this ministry, is that Jesus preached repentance because it's the only hope, it's the only hope. When you take a dying, sick, sinful world and you wanna reconcile them with God, repentance is the only hope. That's why Jesus said, I didn't come to save the righteous, I came to save the sinner, the sick who need a physician.

The funny thing is all those people need a physician, but it's only ones who recognize their need for a physician where Christ was able to heal them. He talked about the prideful, arrogant Pharisees who said, we're not sick, we don't need a physician. And he said, I've come to save and to seek those who recognize their need and turn to me.

And then it gets even more positive, verse 25, at that time Jesus answered and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and the prudent. What the wise is, the wise and the prudent and the arrogant and the foolish, that the truths of God are hidden from them because they think they're God, they don't need God, so God's not gonna reveal himself to people who reject him. When I talk to very arrogant people, atheists or whatever, I say, listen, truly humble yourself and ask God to reveal himself.

I'm not gonna do that. Really? Wow, there's no God, that'd be silly, that'd be stupid. What if? Because I know in the deep recesses of your heart, you'll be weeping like a baby on your deathbed.

Mr. Tough Guy now will see it when you've got four days to live. And that's what people need to do, they need to turn to him. Even so, Father, for it seemed good to you in your sight, all these things have been delivered to me by my Father.

And no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal him. Verse 28, here we go. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. And what a yoke was, many of you know, it's this big wooden contraption, let's call it that, and it would go on top of the necks of oxen, and they would be yoked together.

And that yoke is tied to whatever it's pulling. So you have this oxen moving in unison, moving in strength, moving with their power together, pulling that yoke. So Jesus is saying, listen, come to me.

If you're heavy or weak, stop going in that direction. Get lined up with my will again. Get yoked up underneath me.

Yeah, there'd be a little bit something on your neck, but I'll be the one pulling. I'll be the one guiding. I'll be the one lifting you up.

My yoke is very easy. Turn to me and allow that yoke to begin to rebuild your life. And I know at this point in the sermon, it's always hard because I know there's so many people that need to do what Jesus says.

Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden. And they come week after week and month after month and year after year, weak and heavy laden, and they never give that yoke over to Him. And that obviously has dual meaning.

If you're there and you've never truly repented, that's a very good word, if you've never truly repented and said, Lord, I need you, I'm a sinner, would you come and save me? This is a call to that. And it's also a call to the Christian. Have you ever, has life ever begun to start to just engulf you and you think you're going down and the challenges are too great and the load's too heavy? Jesus says, now's when I need you to come to me.

Turn everything over to me and let me begin to support you instead of you supporting yourself. It's interesting. If you get an ox a little higher, a little stronger, they can take the brunt of that load.

And the same thing with Jesus. If we just allow Him to guide us and lead us, He will take that yoke away from us, or that burden and that heavy lifting that we feel. I don't know, maybe it's just you, but I feel sometimes life is just crushing me.

Right, the demands, the letdowns, the setbacks, the plans that fail, this isn't happening, and it just begins to, you almost think you're shrinking in size. Just the weight of the world. And that's the time when Jesus says, come to me, all that are weak and heavy laden, I will give you rest.

He doesn't say, maybe I'll try if I can fit you in. It will happen. It will happen.

If you surrender to that yoke, if you surrender to His will, if you say, Lord, I want to get in the same direction that you're going, that is a prayer He will answer.

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