

SUNDAY HANDOUT FOR DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION - May 31

Wrestling with Doubt (Matthew 11:1-24)

We all wrestle with things not going the way we expect them to go - with God not doing for us what we think is best, and on our timetable. It's in that kind of hardship that doubts can rise up and overwhelm us. In Matthew 11:1-24, John the Baptist, one of the greatest men on earth in Jesus' opinion, is wrestling with doubt. It's a place where honest questions find honest answers, personal expectations are dashed to pieces and sobering words are in search of a humble heart. Jesus isn't threatened by your questions, discouragement and doubt. He'll meet you right where you are.

1. Bring your honest questions to find honest answers (Matthew 11:1-6)

2. Allow your personal expectations to be dashed to pieces (Matthew 11:7-19)

3. Receive sobering words with a humble heart (Matthew 11:20-24)

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Matthew 11:1-15 and Matthew 3:7-12. When John the Baptist was preaching in chapter 3, how did he describe the coming Messiah (King)? What kind of imagery did he use? Now look at John in chapter 11 - he is languishing in prison while Jesus is healing people and eating with sinners. Why do you think John was struggling with doubt?
2. In Matthew 11:4-6, instead of giving a straight "yes" or "no" to John's disciples, Jesus responds by quoting Old Testament verses from Isaiah. Why do you think Jesus chose to answer this way?
3. It was said: *"Dark and trying times, filled with unanswered questions, can become a breeding ground for doubt and despair...but Jesus isn't threatened by your questions."* John didn't abandon his faith; instead, he sent his disciples directly to Jesus with his question. When you face difficult seasons, do you tend to pull away from Jesus, or do you bring him your honest questions? What keeps us from being completely honest with him?
4. In Matthew 11:6, Jesus says, *"Blessed is the one who is not offended by me"* (literally, who doesn't trip or stumble over me). In what areas of your life are you tempted to "stumble" because Jesus isn't operating on your timeline or matching your expectations (career, relationships, health, or unanswered prayers)?
5. Read Matthew 11:16-24. Jesus compares that generation to children playing games in the marketplace, and then pronounces a heavy judgment on cities like Capernaum and Chorazin. What are verses 16-19 saying about the hearts of the people listening to Jesus? Why does Jesus judge particular cities more harshly than historically wicked cities like Sodom? What does this teach us about how Jesus views *indifference*?
6. We were challenged to consider if we are just using Jesus for a miracle, comfort, or blessing, rather than seeking an intimate, life-shaping relationship. How can we identify the difference between "using" Jesus as a means to an end versus truly "reorienting our lives" around Him in deep repentance?

Split into pairs or pray as a whole group. Confess the areas where your expectations of God have caused resentment or doubt. Ask the Holy Spirit for a humble, responsive heart that is willing to trust Jesus' timing and methods, even when they look very different than our own plans.