

# 10 THINGS JESUS I WISH NEVER SAID

## WEEK ONE: TO SURRENDER IS TO KNOW

Jesus said some things that make us uncomfortable. His words pierce to the heart and they require a response. We either obey them or we reject them.

In today's text, we see Jesus being confronted by 3 different groups who question his identity and his work as the Messiah. They all have reasons for refusing to surrender fully to him, and so do we. As we look at the passage today, let's have an open heart and mind towards the things that are holding us back from surrendering fully to Christ.

**TEXT: MATTHEW 11:1-30**

### 1. UNSURRENDERED EXPECTATIONS LEAD TO DOUBT

- Read Matthew 11:1-18

John the Baptist was Jesus's cousin, and no doubt had known the stories about Jesus's miraculous birth. As a prophet called by God to prepare the way for the Messiah, he would have been full of expectation that Jesus was the one. Not only was he expectant, he identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Yet, now that John was in prison, and it did not look like Jesus was about to rise up and fight off the Romans, he started to doubt that Jesus was the ruler he was expecting. Though he had known he was the Christ, he wanted Jesus to prove his "kingship" in a way that would convince him once and for all. John expected the Messiah to be a politically powerful figure, and because Jesus did not fit his expectations, he doubted. We do the same with God. When he does not do what we expect, or deliver on what we think we need, we doubt his ability to be all-powerful and good.

- ❖ Q: In difficult circumstances, when there is no real way out of the mess, do you start to doubt the goodness of God? Explain why this is.
- ❖ Q: In what ways have you been guilty of expecting Jesus to be something other than what he has promised to be? How did that affect your faith at the time?
- ❖ Q: What do you think it means for us to surrender our expectations of Christ to God?

### 2. UNSURRENDERED DEMANDS LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT

The Jews wanted something other than what God wanted to give them. They didn't want John's message of repentance, and they did not want Jesus' approach to loving sinners. They wanted a Messiah of their own making. They had specific demands of the Messiah, and anything less would lead them to unbelief. Many of us conduct our relationship with God like this: either he acts a certain way, or we are out the door, no longer believing and serving him. We hold him ransom to our demands. The best way for us to know what we are demanding from God, is to look at the disappointments in our lives, and ask ourselves what demands we were placing on God that he did not fulfil for us.

- Read Matthew 11:16-19
- ❖ Q: How do some of our disappointments reveal the demands we are placing on God?

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- ❖ Q: What demands have you placed on God in the past, that you now identify as being your own agenda?
- ❖ Q: What demands have you placed on God recently, and what is he asking you to do about it in light of this message?

## 3. UNSURRENDERED HEARTS LEAD TO DESPAIR

- Read Matthew 11:20-24

Jews in the surrounding towns had all the knowledge and expectation of the promised Messiah, and yet that did not alter their inability to believe in Jesus. They should have embraced John's message, but they didn't because they didn't want to repent. When Jesus appeared on the scene, they didn't accept him because he was not "religious" enough for them – for he ate and spoke with sinners.

The issue of unbelief lay in their hearts. They did not want a saviour from sin, they wanted something else. And because Jesus did not meet their expectations, nothing he did would cause them to surrender and repent. This is a despairing place to be.

Our hearts are either moved by God or they are not. If our hearts are not moved to repent, then there is very little that will move us. True repentance is a deep conviction of our need for change.

- ❖ Q: Why did the Jews in the surrounding areas not believe that Jesus was the Messiah?
- ❖ Q: Why is repentance a sign of the work of the Spirit in our lives?
- ❖ Q: Why is it a despairing place to be, if our hearts are not moved to repentance?

## 4. HOW DO WE SURRENDER?

- Read Matthew 11:25-30

This passage teaches that we cannot trust our own ability to find our way to God. Our own demands and expectations lead us astray. So, even in our desire to trust God for who he is, we have to surrender to the fact that Christ is the one in authority - even over that very process. He is the one who has to reveal himself to us. We also need to lay down our expectations, demands and whatever else lies in our hearts, as these are big obstacles to our belief. We then need to embrace the Lordship of Christ. This means handing over the reins to him, as our new Master. When we do this, we share in the intimacy of Christ.

- ❖ Q: Why is it actually liberating to know that Christ is the one who reveals himself to us?
- ❖ Q: Why do we need to lay down our expectations and demands of Christ, in order to come to him as we are?
- ❖ Q: Why is the idea of surrender so hard for us?

Personal Reflection Q: What is God asking you to surrender to him today?