

Sermon Reflections

Doubts and Unmet Expectations (Matthew 11:1-19)

Summary: Skewed expectations make faith hard. Answer your doubts with the solid truth of God's Word. Four ways Christ answers our doubts:

1. God's word and works answer our doubts (vv. 2-6)

- John was a man prophesied in scripture, filled with the Spirit, who heard the voice of God, and who proclaimed "Jesus is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." And yet, when his situation did not align with his expectations, he experienced doubt. Like John, we too experience doubt when our situations are not consistent with our expectations.
- What are the situations in your life (family, work, government) that are not aligning with your expectations? Do you question God's sovereignty, wisdom, or goodness as a result? Why? What does God's Word state about His character and your response?

2. God's witness ends our search for truth (vv. 7-10)

- Scripture identifies John as the one who would prepare people to receive Christ. He was God's true spokesman and thus the end of searching for truth.
- What pulls you away from Christ and His Word? Why? In your various doubts and difficulties, where do you turn for truth? Why? What does it deliver?

3. God's Word corrects misconceptions (vv. 11-15)

- One misconception is that when you trust Christ, life will be better - as you define better. Yet, Matthew 11:12 and the surrounding context indicates violence and difficulty associated with God's kingdom and His people. Thus, suffering and difficulty should be expected as exemplified by John.
- Where do you look for peace in the midst of life's trials? Why? What expectations need revision based on God's Word?

4. God's wisdom exposes hard hearts (vv. 16-19)

- Jesus compares the generation of that day to complaining children who ridicule those who refuse to play by their changing rules. They rejected John for ascetic practices and Jesus for doing the opposite. You cannot win against a hard, unbelieving heart. But this is you without Christ.
- Take a minute and thank God for breaking through your hard heart. Ask Him to reveal any remaining hardness in your heart. Who can you lift in prayer and ask God to show mercy and break through their hard heart?