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**SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)**

**TITLE: Program 18 – Vindicated By Your Deeds**

**WEDNESDAY**

**OPEN**

Are there some people in your life that no matter what you do, no matter what you say, no matter the way you say it or the way you do it, you simply cannot please them. There's just no making them happy. What do you do with people you cannot please? We're going to talk about it today, as I sit in a city, Chorazin, by the shores of the Galilee, a city where they were not happy with Jesus.

**PART ONE**

I wonder, Beloved, if you realize that the kingdom of heaven cannot be taken by force. It can't be taken by violence. (See Matthew 11:12) You can't have it your way. It has to be God's way or there's no kingdom of heaven for you. This is part of the message that we see today in Matthew chapter 11. Remember, in Matthew chapter 11, it opens telling us that John is in prison and he is wondering if Jesus truly is the Expected One. Is He the Messiah, or

should they look for someone else? (See Matthew 11:2) And he's wondering that because he's in prison. And if Jesus is the Expected One and he's going to bring in the kingdom, then where is the kingdom and why are the followers of Jesus Christ experiencing this persecution? And yet, what we saw is in Matthew chapter 10, Jesus told them that they were going to be persecuted, that they were going to be brought before governors and kings and that those that received them were receiving him. And those that received Him were receiving the Father that sent him. And there was a reward for those that received prophets, for those that received disciples, who following God, honored the people of God. Well Jesus wants them to understand who John the Baptist is. And he has told them, [What did you go out into the wilderness to see? Did you go out to see someone that was like a reed shaken by the wind? Did you go out to find someone in soft clothing? Those in soft clothing belong in kings' palaces!] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 11:7-8) He said "No," **"But what did you... see...,"** in Matthew chapter 11 verse 9, **"...A prophet? Yes, [and] I tell you...one who is more than a prophet."** (Matthew 11:9) What does he mean by that? Well let's look at it. He says, **"This is the one about whom it is written, 'Behold, I [will] send my messenger [before you], who will prepare your way before [me].'"** (Matthew 11:10) Now this is who John the Baptist was, if they would believe this, if they would receive this. And so He quotes Malachi chapter 3 verse 1. And then He goes on to say, **"Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen ...one greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."** (Matthew 11:11) Now why is He saying this and what does He mean? Well He goes on to say, **"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. For all the [Law and the prophets] prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who [is] to come. He who has ears...let him hear."** (Matthew 11:12-15) What is the message

that He has for them? What is the message that He has for us? He tells us that [the kingdom is going to suffer violence because men are going to try and take it by violence.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 11:12) In other words they're not going to take it, listen carefully, by faith. They're going to try to force themselves into the kingdom. They're going to try and set up a kingdom of their own devising; a kingdom with their rules and their ways and their policies, so to speak. And God says, "No, that's not going to happen." You can't take the kingdom of heaven by violence although these men are trying to do it. What is God's message to you? And what is God's message to me as I sit here in the ruins of Chorazin? That you come into the kingdom His way, or you don't come at all. You cannot take it by violence. You cannot say, "I'm sorry but God and I have an agreement. We have an understanding and I just don't believe all that stuff in the Bible. But don't worry about me; I'm just fine, just leave me alone. The man upstairs and I have an agreement." I want to tell you something, it is not a "man upstairs," it is God Almighty. It is the creator of the heavens and the earth, the One that spoke and brought the world into existence. He is not the man upstairs. He is Almighty God and you come to Him His way or you don't come at all. And He says, **"He [that] has ears to hear, let him hear." (Matthew 11:15)** In other words, not everybody's going to hear. Not everybody is going to believe. Now I want us to go back to Matthew chapter 11 and what I'm going to suggest is that you put some scriptures in the margin. It says, **"...All the prophets and the Law prophesied until John [the Baptist]." (11:13)** The last prophecy in the Word of God is in the book of Malachi and it is a prophecy that is really, in essence, about John the Baptist. And I want us to go, right now to Malachi chapter 3 and I want us to look at several verses there. He says in Malachi chapter 3 verse 1, **"Behold I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, [the Lord whom you seek] will [come suddenly] to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight,**

**behold, He is coming,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (Malachi 3:1)** Jesus was the messenger of the new covenant, the new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ. (See Hebrews 12:24) The new covenant that promised forgiveness of sins, the new covenant that promised in Ezekiel, his spirit dwelling within them. (See Ezekiel 11:9) So He was the messenger of the new covenant. And then it goes on to say, **“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver...He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them [as] gold...so that they may present...,”** listen carefully now, so that they may present **“...to the Lord offerings in righteousness,” (Malachi 3:2-3)** The Scribes and the Pharisees had an external righteousness but not an internal righteousness. Remember the Sermon on the Mount? Remember He said, [“Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no-wise enter the kingdom of heaven.”]? (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:20, ASV) Well then when we go to Malachi chapter 4 in verse 5, these are His closing words. God doesn’t speak anymore after this. He’s silent for 400 years. And His last words are this promise. Verse 5 of Malachi chapter 4, **“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5-6)** He says, **“...I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord.” (Malachi 4:5)** Now keeping that in mind, I want you to look at what he says in verse 14 of Matthew chapter 11. **“And if you are willing to accept it...,”** Jesus is saying it, **“...John himself is Elijah who was to come.” (Matthew 11:14)** “If you will accept it, if you would accept this message, if you would believe him, if you would repent because **‘...The kingdom of heaven is at hand,’ (Matthew 4:17)** if you would believe what John said about me that I am the Lamb of God, that I am the

Messiah, that I am the Expected One. If you would believe that, Beloved, then I'm telling you that John the Baptist would have been Elijah who was to come. He would have been that because he was the forerunner. He was the messenger." (See also John 1:29, Matthew 11:14) He was the one that was saying, **'...Prepare ye the way of the Lord....'** " (Isaiah 40:3, KJV) And that's why he turns and he says to them, "[And] **he who has ears..., let him hear.**" (Matthew 11:15) Then in verse 16 and it's very important, **"But... what shall I compare this generation [to]...?"** He says, **"...[It's] like children sitting in the market places, who call out to...other children and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; [and] we [played] a dirge, and you [didn't] mourn.'** (Matthew 11:16-17) "You're like children. You want them to dance. You want them to mourn. You want them to go this way and you want to go that way. You're like children. There's no satisfying you. You didn't do it." That's what He's saying. He goes on to say, **"For John came neither eating [or] drinking, and [you all said that he had] a demon!"** (Matthew 11:18) They said he had a demon, "He doesn't eat, he doesn't drink, he has a demon. He's out in the wilderness and he's eating those locusts he's living off of wild honey and he's dressed in those strange clothes, the man has a demon." And then, **"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by [his] deeds."** (Matthew 11:19) ["Here is John the Baptist. He's not eating, he's not drinking and you, like those children, are saying, 'He has a demon.'"] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 11:18) Then Jesus comes and he's eating and [He's drinking and you say, "He is a glutton, He is a drunkard." you say, "He's a friend of tax collectors and sinners." ] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 11:19) Now listen carefully because what you see here is what so many of us deal with. Have you ever dealt with someone and no matter what you did you couldn't please them? No matter what you've said, you'd think you were going along great and all of a

sudden they were in a huff. All of a sudden they just had their nose up in the air. All of a sudden they had folded their hands and just closed you out. You cannot please them. That was what the scribes and the Pharisees were like. That's what that generation was like. Jesus came—the blind saw, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the demons were cast out—and yet they still would not believe that He was the Messiah. The chief priest; He could not satisfy the chief priests. He could not satisfy the scribes. He could not satisfy them. And He couldn't satisfy them because they were a [wicked and they were an adulterous generation] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 16:4) and there was no satisfying them at all.

## **PART TWO**

Remember before the break I was talking to you about people that you just can't seem to satisfy. No matter what you do, you cannot make them happy. No matter how you act, they're going to find something wrong with you. You just can't please them. This was the scribes. This was the Pharisees. And this was many, many people of that day. And you know what, it's many people of our day. We live such self-centered lives. We are so occupied with "me." It's all about me. It's all about my happiness. And if we want God, we want God to do our bidding. We want God to shine our shoes, so to speak. We want God to provide our food. We want God to give us a good job. We want God to give us a better car. We want God for our benefit. We're not willing, really, to look at him and say, "You are God and because you are God, I will follow you wherever you tell me to go. I will do whatever you tell me to do." We just can't be satisfied, can we? Well, Jesus looked at these people and He said, **"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they [said], 'Behold, a gluttonous... and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners...!'"** And then He made this statement, **"...Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."** (Matthew 11:19) You look at a person and if they're truly wise you will see it in their lives. Their deeds will

show the voracity of who they are. It will show the wisdom that they have, the understanding of life. Now the next phrase says this, **“Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.” (Matthew 11:20)** Here was one even greater than John the Baptist. John the Baptist couldn’t satisfy them, the Son of God could not satisfy them. And so He says to them, **“Woe to you, Chorazin...!” (Matthew 11:21)** Do you know that earthquakes have been in this place? Do you know that the rocks have come tumbling down? **“Woe to you Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! [And woe] ...if the miracles [which] had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented [a] long [time] ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21)** He says, [“Listen, I have come and I’ve done miracles in Chorazin. I have done miracles in Bethsaida. Two prominent cities right here around the northern end of the Sea of Galilee.” He says, “I have done these miracles and you didn’t repent. You didn’t repent.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 11:21) The message of the kingdom is **“...Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17)** And repent means see your sin, see your need of God, see your wretchedness, see your poverty of spirit and have a change of mind. And believe. Come to God and believe in Him.” Well He goes on to say **“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had [occurred] in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.” (Matthew 11:21-22)** Tyre and Sidon are going to be in the day of judgment. Chorazin’s going to be there, Bethsaida. Beloved, he’s talking about people that saw the power of God, who saw the power of God. Who saw the miracles but would not believe, would not repent. He goes on to say, **“And you, Capernaum...,” (Matthew 11:23a)** Capernaum, remember is his hometown? Capernaum is where he lives. Capernaum is where Peter’s house is. **“And you, Capernaum, will**

**not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.” (Matthew 11:23)** Sodom and Gomorrah never would have been destroyed if they had had the witness of Jesus Christ. If they had seen the blind receive their sight, if they had seen the lame walk, if they had seen the demons cast out, they would have repented. He says, [“And yet you Capernaum, where I lived, where I had a ministry, where I healed in Peter’s house and those that came from all over the Galilee. You didn’t repent, but Sodom and Gomorrah would have repented. So,” He says, “You will descend to Hades.] You’re not going to be exalted to heaven, your fate is written; your fate is written.” (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 11:23)

Precious One, you and I have to understand this. For as long as we live, we have a choice. But the minute we die our choice is over and our destiny is set. If you die without Jesus Christ, there’s no second chance. You say, “I don’t believe that.” It doesn’t matter whether you believe it or not, Precious One, it is true. You need to repent, if you don’t believe that. This is the Book, this is the Truth. And you and I have to bow the knee to this truth. So he says, **“Nevertheless I say to you... it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.” (Matthew 11:24)**

You know if we had time and we would go to Revelation chapter 20, you would see the dead raised. You would see death and Hades giving up the dead. And you would see them standing at the Great White Throne judgment. And as they stand there, the books are opened first. Is their name written in The Book of Life? No, otherwise they wouldn’t be there. Second, what are their deeds? And so they’re judged according to their deeds. And what He’s saying is on that Day of Judgment when they’re all cast into the lake of fire, those in Sodom and Gomorrah are not going to receive the torment that those that were living in Capernaum and Chorazin and Bethsaida received. (See Revelation 20:11-15) Why? Because they did not have the witness that Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum had. God



wants you and I to know and understand that [to whom much is given, much is required.] (PARAPHRASE, Luke 12:48, KJV) And if you have been exposed over and over and over to the Word of God, you can know this, Precious One, you can know that if you haven't believed the message, it's not going to be very tolerable for you in that day. It says, **"At that time Jesus said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father...',"** watch how many times He uses Father. **"Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing [to you]. All things [had] been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all [ye that] are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you ... learn from Me, [learn from Me] for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."** (Matthew 11:25-30) The invitation goes forward and Precious One, you can know that if you have received it, it is because Jesus Himself has revealed the Father to you. (See John 1:18) Not to the wise men, not to the scholarly but to the infants, to the babes, those that are quick to believe, those that will walk by faith. Are you weary? Are you heavy-laden? Are you weary with people that you cannot please? Oh come to Jesus, He understands. [His burden is easy, his yoke is light. He will give you rest.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 11:29-30) He'll give you eternal rest with him in his home. Won't you come to Jesus?