

Title: TWO GROUPS, WORLD'S APART, MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30  
(Chatham, NJ; 07/03/11, AM) [S-P, Two-Point Outline]

Theme: The reaction of people to Jesus and John illustrates the divergence between two groups of people, those who accept Jesus and those who reject him.

Purpose: To clarify the differences between the groups and to warn the congregation not to fall prey to the unbelievers and their worldly way of thinking.

Introduction:

1. Both John the Baptist and Jesus stirred up strong reactions from different people.
2. Jesus credits this in part to the will of God; he reveals himself to the lowly.
3. The reaction of one group to both John and Jesus draws some sharp criticism from him.
4. I think the two groups exist still today; let's examine what we see.

I. Group/View #1

A. Response to two prophets

1. A children's game: you didn't want to play, 16-17
2. They didn't respond to John's call to repentance (a funeral dirge)
3. They didn't respond to Jesus and his joyous activity (song for dancing); the Psalms and the Prophets spoke of God's salvation as joyful.
4. John was called demon-possessed.
5. Jesus was a glutton, a drunkard, and a friend of tax-collectors and sinners.
6. They failed to respond to either message.
7. They stood aloof, unable to choose because it affected their entire system of thinking and living, Mt. 21:23-27.
8. Jesus refused to answer their question because it should have been obvious and because they were too blind to accept the answer.
9. People are blinded by an ideology of their own making, and when something doesn't fit the ideology (as with John and Jesus), they can't reconcile with it.
10. Despite the fact that each one was perfectly consistent with their traditions.

B. Today's refusers (contrarians)

1. The promise of liberation, from repressive morals, laws, etc.
2. The vote in New York to allow homosexual marriage advances a much larger agenda of loosening norms of sexual ethics.
3. This view of sexual repression (Sanger, Kinsey, and Hefner, see George's comments) hardened into orthodoxy; that is where the stubbornness comes in.
4. In the seventies marriage was one of the "repressive" institutions, and thus we had the explosion of divorce.
5. Remember Peter's warning, 2 Peter 2:19.
6. Real slavery occurs when people give themselves over to sin, desires, and passions.
7. Those who promote this cannot perceive John's call to repent and they ridicule Jesus because he calls them to true freedom.

C. One and the same group

1. There may be more to their stubbornness, but both groups are one and the same in their hatred of God's ways.
2. They are one and the same in thinking they are the elite and progressive people of society (the wise and learned, vs. 25).
3. Jesus suggests that the end result of their actions will become self-evident: wisdom is justified by her deeds (children).
4. Look at what Jesus' contemporaries and ours have produced.

## II. Group/View #2

- A. God has revealed himself to "little children."
  - 1. The wise and learned don't accept Jesus.
  - 2. The humble and contrite of heart do (Ps. 51:17 & Is. 66:2)
  - 3. They can see what the wise and learned (elite) cannot see, maybe because the wise refuse to see.
  
- B. Jesus appeals to those who "labor and are heavy laden," 28
  - 1. An invitation based on the nature of God, Psalm 145:14.
  - 2. Jesus invites all for whom life has become a burden, strife, and confusion.
  - 3. The reason is less significant than the fact of their feelings.
  - 4. In light of the Law of Moses, they might well feel burdened with guilt.
  - 5. But there may be a wide range of things that produce the feeling of burden.
  - 6. Calvin said, "Failure makes us fit to receive His grace."
  
- C. Jesus yoke
  - 1. Easy and his burden is light, 30
  - 2. 1 John 5:3 says his commands are not burdensome.
  - 3. Those who accuse them of being repressive have it all wrong.
  - 4. They actually provide the way to life and freedom.
  - 5. Jesus is gentle and humble of heart.
  - 6. "Learn from me," he says.

### Conclusion:

- 1. Which group do you want to be in? You can choose.
- 2. God reveals himself to the one and not the other.
- 3. Are you burdened by the ways of the world? Or your struggle to be good? Or the anxieties and worries of life?
- 4. No one cares for you like Jesus.
- 5. Contrary to what some say his ways are not repressive and burdensome; it is, rather, the ways of sin that imprisons and destroys. "The wages of sin is death," Romans 6:23.
- 6. If you can see that, then you can also see that "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," also Romans 6:23.
- 7. Furthermore you must be in the second group if you believe that.
- 8. Come to Jesus; believe in Jesus; live for him who is humble and gentle in heart.
- 9. You will find rest for your souls.