

Title: THE DIRGE AND THE DANCE, MATTHEW 11:16-30
(Chatham, NJ; 07/06/14, AM) [Pc – Exegesis, Contrasting Outline]

Theme: Jesus challenges his audiences on their unwillingness to respond to the presence of the Kingdom of God, and he reveals why it is so hard for the worldly wise to believe.

Purpose: To instruct the church about the importance of believing and not rejecting the Gospel.

Introduction:

1. The Word of God exposes the soul of men.
2. Our response to Jesus reflects the condition of our soul.
3. The inability of many of Jesus' own countrymen to accept him becomes a reminder not to harden our hearts, Ps. 95:8-11, or to become weary in doing good.

I. Who Are the Wise? (16-19)

A. The music of God

1. Many of Jesus' listeners didn't respond to any of God's songs
2. They refused to mourn when John sang a funeral dirge
3. Then they didn't dance when Jesus played a joyful flute
4. They said, "John has a demon; Jesus is a drunkard."

B. Wisdom proved by her deeds

1. Words vs. deeds; image vs. reality; symbolism vs. substance; intentions vs. behavior
2. The image a person presents isn't necessarily the reality of his spiritual condition; Mt. 6 makes this clear.
3. James 3:13 – wisdom demonstrated by what one does not what one says or appears to be
4. The wolf in sheep's clothing can be seen by what he does; his fruit will be the telltale sign, Mt. 7:15-18.
5. A true heart responds to God's music.

II. Unrepentant Cities (20-24): Challenging His Generation and Ours

A. Chorazin and Bethsaida versus Tyre and Sidon

1. The first are towns around the north shore of the Sea of Galilee
2. Tyre and Sidon are cities of the Gentiles – Elijah lived in Zarephath between them during the famine in 1 Kings 17
3. Jesus asserts that these Gentile cities would repent though Israel refuses

B. Capernaum versus Sodom

1. Capernaum: also near the north shore of the Sea
2. Here Jesus healed the paralytic, Mark 2:1
3. Yet many refused to believe
4. If Sodom had seen his miracles, they would have repented
5. Capernaum was worse than Sodom

C. The day of judgment

1. These Gentile cities will bear a lighter burden on the Day of Judgment
2. Jesus emphasizes the importance of what God has done through him
3. He highlights our response

III. Open Hearts – Little Children (25-30)

A. Wise and learned versus "little children"

1. Little children and babes not defined simply by age
2. Their minds are uncluttered by worldly arrogance and self-assurance
3. They are open to wonder and to belief
4. The real message here is that the knowledge of God does not depend on human wisdom and education
5. Little children rely on God's insights not their own, Proverbs 3:5-7, whereas the wise and learned depend on their own insights

B. Come to me

1. The burdens of life and the law have weighed people down
2. You will find rest for your souls
3. Learn from me
4. This is not "ceaseless ease"
5. More like joyful, meaningful, and hopeful living
6. Though in this life there are burdens and trials, the soul is free and full of hope
7. Thus, Jesus' burden becomes light

Conclusions:

1. The music of God plays both a dirge and a dance.
2. Your response to it determines your fate.
3. The world is full of skepticism, cynicism, and arrogance, all of which will keep you from believing and responding.
4. The Gospel is for all, but those whose hearts are humble will hear him best.
5. Come to Jesus for the rest that he offers; he is gentle and humble in heart.