

Matthew: Cost of the Kingdom

Discussion Guide for Matthew 11:1-19 on Sep. 6th & 7th, 2025

Summary

In this sermon from Matthew 11:1-19, we explore the theme of rejection in Jesus' ministry, especially through John the Baptist's question about whether Jesus is truly the Messiah. The sermon discusses how even faithful followers like John can struggle when their expectations of Jesus don't match reality. Jesus responds by pointing to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies as proof of His identity, praises John as the greatest prophet, and yet declares that kingdom citizens are even greater. The message challenges us to reject worldly definitions of success and instead center our lives fully on Jesus.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we reflect on Your Word from Matthew 11 today, open our eyes to see Jesus clearly as the Messiah You promised. Help us confront any wrong expectations we've placed on You, and give us hearts that embrace Your kingdom values over worldly success. Strengthen us to find our true greatness in You, and remind us that nothing compares to the eternal life we have in Christ. Guide our discussion to draw us closer to You and to one another. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you faced rejection—whether from a job, relationship, or opportunity. How did it shape you? Did it lead to discouragement or to growth?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 11:4-6
2. Matth Matthew 11:11
3. Matthew 11:14-15
4. Isaiah 35:5-6
5. Isaiah 61:1
6. John 1:29

Questions

1. How does Michael Jordan's high school rejection parallel the rejection faced by Jesus and John the Baptist in this passage?
2. John the Baptist once boldly declared Jesus as Messiah, but later sent messengers to ask Him directly. Which theory makes the most sense to you—doubts caused by John's own rejection, or John urging Jesus to act?
3. The sermon highlights how we often want a Jesus who brings health, wealth, or political power instead of spiritual transformation. How have cultural influences, like the "American Dream" shaped your expectations of God?
4. Jesus responds to John's question by pointing to fulfilled prophecies. How does this remind us that

His identity is grounded in Scripture, not in our personal expectations?

5. Jesus says John is the greatest among those born of women, yet the least in the kingdom is greater than he. What does this teach us about the difference between worldly greatness and kingdom greatness?

6. How has social media or celebrity culture shaped your own view of what "greatness" looks like?

7. Jesus compares His generation to children who rejected both Him and John. Are there areas in your own life where you've resisted God because His way didn't align with your expectations?

8. The Bible points to Jesus as the center. What would change in your daily life if you made Jesus your top priority in time, decisions, and relationships?

9. Reflecting on Psalm 84, how does thinking about eternity shift how you approach life now?

10. What's one wrong expectation about Jesus or following Him that you sense God is asking you to let go of right now?

Life Application

This week, identify one area where your expectations of Jesus or life in His kingdom have led to disappointment—maybe expecting ease, success, or instant answers. Take one practical step toward kingdom greatness: serve someone often overlooked, release control in an area you've been holding tightly, or choose obedience where it's hard. Notice how this shift brings you closer to centering your life on Christ.

Key Takeaways

1. Rejection is universal, but Jesus' identity as Messiah is proven through fulfilled Scripture, not unmet expectations.
2. Misunderstandings of Jesus often cause us to miss His true purpose: spiritual rescue and transformation.
3. Worldly success is fleeting; true greatness comes from belonging to God's kingdom.
4. The Bible's story centers on Jesus, calling us to live for His glory with eternal rewards beyond comparison.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for revealing Yourself as the true Messiah through Your words and works. Forgive us for the times we've rejected You because of wrong expectations or worldly desires. Help us center our lives on You, embracing the greatness of Your kingdom over fleeting success. Give us ears to hear, hearts to receive, and courage to live as Your disciples. May our celebration in Communion remind us of our acceptance in You and fuel us for the week ahead. In Your mighty name, amen.