

GOD'S GRACE, THE ANSWER TO HUMAN GUILT

MATTHEW 11:25-28 • TV062B

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Matthew 11:25-28

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

I want to first announce my text for the message today. I'll be speaking from **Matthew 11:25-27**. I want you to take your Bible and follow with me; will you do that, **Matthew 11:25-27**; that will be the text.

Now, the subject: **“GOD'S GRACE, THE ANSWER TO HUMAN GUILT.”**

Now, we are going to school. We are going to try to learn something. We are going to pray that the Holy Spirit will be our teacher. We're going to school on one of our Lord's sermons. I don't know of a greater blessing. (I will pass this along to any preacher who may be listening to the program today).

I don't know a more effective way to preach the Gospel than to take one of our Lord's own sermons and re-preach it, take one of our Lord's own sermons and just deliver it like He preached it and ask the Holy Spirit to give us some understanding and to give us a little wisdom and help us to make some comments to help folks understand what is written.

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Now, in this message, **Matthew 11** our Lord was speaking and He had five divisions to the message and five points. Now, if you will look at **verse 7**; that's where the message starts in **verse 7 of Matthew 11** and our Lord begins by talking about the ministry of John the Baptist.

And He said; "What went ye out in the wilderness to see? You people that went out into the wilderness to see and to hear John the Baptist; what did you go out there to see? Did you go out there to see a reed shaken in the wind?"

Do you know what that means? Well, a reed is a blade of grass. And a blade of grass just leans the way the wind is blowing doesn't it? If you can tell which way the wind's blowing by looking at a blade of grass, it'll lean the way that the wind's blowing.

Now He said, "Is that what you went out to see?" Some religious leaders are like that. Some preachers are like that for popularity or success or riches, they preach what people want to hear. They just go the way that the wind's blowing.

They don't preach what God says. They don't dare buck the tide. They don't dare swim against the current. They don't dare test controversy. They don't dare declare what the Word of God says; they go the way the wind's blowing.

You know, whatever pleases the people. They don't want to upset the people. But God's true preacher is not a man-pleaser. Paul said, "*If I please men I am not the servant of Jesus Christ.*" God's true preacher doesn't fear man and he doesn't fear controversy if the Word of God is at stake.

I've heard preachers say, "Well I can't preach that, you know; it'd split my church, it would divide my church. I'd lose my job or something." That's a reed driven by the wind or shaken by the wind. He goes the way the wind's blowing, the way the tide of popularity, the tide of public appeal, the tide that pleases the people that tickles the ear. That's the way it goes you know.

And then our Lord said secondly in **verse 8**; "*What did you go out there to see, out in the wilderness, (when you went to hear John the Baptist; what did you go to see) a man clothed in soft raiment?*" Those that be clothed in soft raiment, those who wear soft raiment are in king's houses.

Let me tell you something; let me give a word of advice; this needs to be sounded; I've never heard this. When I was in college or when I was in the seminary, when I was studying for the ministry; I never heard this preached but it needs to be preached.

A preacher who becomes involved in making money in business, in acquiring property, in acquiring stocks and bonds, can say goodbye to his ministry. That's what our Lord said. Did you go out into the wilderness to see a man who was interested in luxury, who was interested in security, who was interested in acquiring business holdings, who was interested in stocks and bonds and who was interested in politics!

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Do you let a preacher get involved in business, in politics, in education; you just name it, he can say goodbye to his ministry. Now that's so. God's preachers do not get involved in those things. They are called to preach the Gospel. They are called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And the Scripture says, "*They that preach the Gospel are to live by the Gospel.*" Now do you know what that means? It means just what it meant back in the Old Testament, in the Levitical priesthood days. You know, the sons of Levi, when all the tribes had the land divided up and there were certain tribes given, certain portions of land but the sons of Levi received no land.

They had no land, they had no ownership of any property. Moses says; "The Lord's your inheritance. You minister about the things of the temple and you'll live by the things of the temple."

And that's the way God's preachers are to live. His prophets are not businessmen. His prophets do not get independently wealthy. His prophets do not live in the lap of luxury. His prophets live by the Gospel and those they minister the Gospel to support them.

That's right! The people, the preachers of the Gospel are supported by those to whom they preach the Gospel. And they are to wait upon God. God supplies their needs and meets their needs and they do not acquire these things.

A man that goes to war does not entangle himself with business affairs back home. He's busy in a battle and the people back home take care of his business needs and his physical needs and his material needs.

He doesn't do it; he's at war. He's got something to do that's far more important than those things. And he's not to get involved. That's what our Lord said.

Now in **verse 9**; "*But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.*"

What did you go out there to see when you went to hear John the Baptist out in the wilderness? What did you go to see, a prophet, a preacher, just any preacher and just any religious spokesman?

Are all who call themselves preachers, the same? Does it matter who you hear? Will just any theologian do? That's what some folks think. Will just any Bible teacher do?

Christ said, "Why'd you go out there? Did you just go out there to hear a preacher? Did you just go out there to hear a prophet, just any preacher or any prophet? No! I say unto you."

Listen at the next **verse 10**: "*I say unto you, he is more than a prophet. (He is more than a preacher). This is he of whom it is written I will send my messenger before thy face to prepare the way before thee (a way for the Redeemer).*"

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This John the Baptist he's talking about here; this preacher is more than just a religious leader, he's more than just a Bible teacher. He's more than just a theologian; he's God's messenger. God sent him. He's ordained and anointed by God.

He's God's spokesman. He's not God's spokesman for the Baptist church or the Methodist church or the Catholic church; he's God's spokesman. And he's not a spokesman for himself or for you or for anybody else. *"There was a man sent from God whose name was John"* and he came to deliver God's message.

And he would not be turned aside. He wouldn't let the wind of popularity drive him this way or the wind of possessions drive him that way or the wind of worldly luxury drive him that way. He wouldn't let anything change his course. He was God's messenger.

He had something to say whether the men liked it or not he said it. Would God we could find some preachers like that today. But the only way that we can find him is for God to send him. And I believe if God sent one you would recognize it. His people would anyway.

Look at **verse 11**, but now watch this; *"Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."*

God's messenger does not need to strive for recognition. He doesn't need to. He doesn't need to vie for popularity. He doesn't need to extend himself for riches; he's the greatest, richest, man in the world.

That's what Christ said; "There's none born of woman, greater than John the Baptist, none. And yet I say unto you: He that's least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Do you understand that?

The grace of God is the leveler of all men. Nowhere in the Bible do you find one of God's men called a "priest," nowhere in the New Testament. Now in the Old Testament you do because of the Old Testament priesthood.

But in the New Testament church there are deacons, elders, bishops, and all of that. There are no priests. Why, because every believer's a priest. *"We are a holy priesthood. We are a royal nation. We are a holy people."* Every believer is a priest. Christ is our high priest and every believer is a priest.

"And he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist." And yet, none born of woman is greater than God's messenger. He's the greatest man born of woman. If God sent him He's a messenger of God. He's sent of God. He's ordained of God and we're to listen to him.

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Secondly; Our Lord deals with this; He deals with the unwillingness of natural men to hear that messenger. Now God says, "I've got a messenger and he's not a reed driven by the wind and he's not a business man; he's a preacher. And he's not just any preacher; he's my preacher, he's my messenger. He's going to say what I sent him to say. But you're not going to hear him." That's what He said. He says, "You won't hear him."

Read **verses 16-19:** *"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."*

You're like children sitting in the marketplace and that fellow says to them; "We've piped unto you and you haven't danced. We play beautiful music and we play happy music. We play exhilarating music and you don't laugh and you don't dance."

And then said; "We played to you sad music. We play funeral songs and you didn't cry and you didn't mourn no matter what we play, whether we play happy songs, you won't laugh, whether we play sad songs and you won't cry." And the Lord said, "That's the way this generation is."

John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking; he came fasting. He came preaching the wrath of God against sin. He came crying, *"Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* He came telling men to face the law of a holy God and repent.

He came preaching, *"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."* And people called him a, *"devil."* That's right! He said, *"John came neither eating nor drinking and you say he hath a devil."*

Well, the son of man came; the son of man came preaching grace, mercy, and peace. The Son of man came eating and drinking. The Son of man became the friend of Publicans and sinners. The Son of man came with a message of God's love. The Son of man came with the message of God's grace.

And how'd you treat that message? Why you said, "He's a winebibber; don't listen to Him. He's a glutton; don't listen to Him." Whatever the note the messenger sounds you won't listen. You're indifferent to it.

If he preaches a sad note you don't weep. If he preaches a happy note you don't rejoice and you don't laugh. It doesn't matter what God's preacher preaches; it falls on deaf ears. Christ said, *"You will not come to me that you might have life."* Isn't that sad? But that's the nature of the human heart.

God said to Ezekiel; "I'll send you these people but they won't listen to you." He said to Isaiah, "Go and preach to them but your message will fall on deaf ears. They won't hear you."

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And Christ said to them: *“You will not come to me that you might have life. Let another come in his own name and him you will receive. I come in my Father’s name and you receive me not.”*

Thirdly: Verse 20, *“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.”* Our Lord began to warn these people.

He said to them; “Now God sent you a messenger, and you wouldn’t hear Him. God sent His own Son and you wouldn’t hear Him. Now he said, “I’m going to warn you.”

He said; “It’s going to be easier, it’s going to be more tolerable, for the cities of Tyre and Sidon; those were wicked cities of the plain, heathen, and idolatress nations; it’s going to be a lot easier for the city of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you in which my mighty works were done, than for you who heard and wouldn’t hear, than for you who saw and wouldn’t see, than for you to whom the light of God came, and you love darkness and resisted the light and to you to whom God sent His messenger to declare His message.” What a sad note; “you will not hear.”

And Christ is saying here that men are going to be responsible and accountable for the light which they have received, for the Gospel which they have heard, or could have heard. It’ll be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for cities in which the Gospel had been preached.

I’ll tell you this; if I were going to the Judgment tomorrow I had much rather go; (I mean going unprepared, unregenerate) if I were going to the Judgment tomorrow, I’d lots rather go from some heathen, idolatress nation, to which Christ has never been preached, to whom Christ has never been declared, than to go to the Judgment from Huntington, West Virginia.”

It’ll be a lot easier, it’ll be a lot easier for Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for this city from which I’m preaching right here. You’ve heard the Gospel; they didn’t. God has done mighty works in your midst, not in theirs.

You know, over in **Ezekiel 33**; this is an interesting Scripture. Write this down and look it up later, **Ezekiel 33:30-33**. Does not the Scripture here warn us? Ezekiel is God’s prophet. He was one like John the Baptist, one God called, one God sent, and one God ordained.

He had the message; he had God’s message. He said, “Ezekiel; people are talking about you by the walls.” You know, back in those oriental countries they had a little house here and it always had a wall around it.

And people stood by the walls and talked about things. They would converse by the walls. They still have those walls in a lot of countries now, like Mexico and Spain. Every house has a wall around it, not a fence, but a wall.

Read this; **Ezekiel 33:30**: *“Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to*

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his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD."

"They're standing by the walls talking about you and they're talking about you in their homes. They are saying, Let's go hear the preacher. Let's go hear the Word that comes from the Lord. They come to hear you. They come together to hear you. And they sit before you as my people. They pretend to be my people. They come and sit there reverently and they come and sit there listening to you and they hear the words you preach."

"And they hear the words you preach but they're not going to do them. They hear them but they are not going to do what you say. With their mouths they show great love. They make great, swelling, professions."

They call Him, "Lord." They call Him "Jesus." They call Him "God" with their mouths but their hearts are set on covetousness, greed, and gain. They are set on this world.

That's where their hearts are. Their hearts are not on God. Their mouths use the name of God and they sit there as my people and they listen to your Words but they're not going to do what you say.

And with their mouths they express great love for God but in their hearts; God sees the heart. He looks not on the outward countenance; He looks on the heart and He says, "With their hearts they go after greed and covetousness and the things of this world."

And Ezekiel, you are to them, you are to them, as one who has a pleasant voice. You are to them one who can play well an instrument. But the Lord says, "They hear your Words and do them not."

And watch this: when Judgment comes to pass and it will come, He said; that's exactly what He says there and it will come. "*It's appointed to men once to die and after this the Judgment.*" It will come. When Judgment comes and it will come; it's appointed unto every man, all men, once to die and after that Judgment.

And when Judgment comes, He says, and it will come; then shall they realize that a prophet has been among them. They'll realize that a prophet has been in their midst." That's when they are going to realize it but it'll be too late.

Fourthly: In Matthew 11: verse 25-26; He said, "*At that time, (now this is interesting, at that time Jesus rejoiced in spirit) I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou has hid these things from the wise and the prudent, (from the worldly wise) and thou hast revealed them to babes, for even so Father; it seemed good in thy sight*"

Now God has sent His messenger and men will not hear the good news; they are totally indifferent, no matter how it is preached, in sadness or joy, they are not going to listen to it. And

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God's going to judge them. God's going to hold them responsible. God's going to bring them to the Judgment. He's going to judge them.

But the Lord Jesus declares here that some are going to hear and some are going to believe and some are going to be blessed with a knowledge of God because God in His grace reveals it to them.

When He had told them these things, when He told them who John was and God had sent him, and told them about their response or lack of it to John and told them about the Judgment; He lifted His eyes to heaven and He said, *"I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I rejoice that you've hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes."* "But thank God you've revealed these things."

What are these things? They are God's mercy. What are these things? They are deliverance from sin. What are these things? They are the substitutionary work of Christ. What are these things? They are God's grace in Christ Jesus, through His obedient life, through His shed blood, through His resurrection, through His intercession?

What are these things? God's effectual work of grace whereby He can be just and justify the ungodly because His Son died for them. And Christ said, *"Lord, you've hid these things from the wise and prudent but you've revealed them unto babes."*

Now, there are four or five things here that are important:

First of all: Here you have, here you have a cause for gratitude!

Thank God He didn't leave us to ourselves. *"Now who made you to differ?"* You say, "Well preacher; I know I'm a sinner and I believe the Gospel. And I rest in Christ and I know that sinners are not saved by works of righteousness which they've done but according to His mercy I know."

"Who made you to differ?" You say, "I don't refuse the Gospel; I receive it." *"Who made you to differ? What have you got that you didn't receive? Now, if you received it why do you glory as if you didn't receive it?"* God gave it to you!

Jesus Christ our Lord is telling us how we ought to rejoice and praise God that He made the difference. He said, *"Father, I thank you."* Not all men are going to be damned; thank God. Some men are going to be saved; thank God.

I'm one of them by His grace; thank God. You're one of them by His grace; thank God. *"Father, I thank you."* Because He's the author of grace, *"Thou hast hid these things. Thou hast revealed these things. It seemed good in thy sight."* Yes sir, thank God.

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"We're His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." He didn't leave us in our darkness but He visited us in His mercy. Paul said, *"When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to reveal His Son in me."*

Who revealed Him? God did. He's the author of all grace. *"Salvation's of the Lord."* It's of the Lord. Salvation is not something you do for yourself or the preacher does for you or you do for God; it's something God does for you. He makes you a new creature. *"He gave His Son to die for us."* That's right!

All right; here's the Father's right to act as He does; the Lord Jesus at that time, when He had told them about His messenger and their unwillingness to hear it, and the certainty of Judgment at that time; He lifted His eyes to heaven and He thanked God.

He thanked the Father that the Father was pleased in His mercy, in His grace, to save some people for His name's sake and for the praise of His glory.

And you know the right that God has to do; you say, "What right does God have to save some and pass by others, to reveal Christ to some and hide the Gospel from others?" He's Lord of heaven and earth; that's what right He has.

That's what Christ said: *"I thank thee Father Lord of heaven and earth."* Do you know what the Lord is? He's the King. He's the boss. That's right; He's the sovereign and He's the Lord of heaven and earth.

That gives Him the right to do with His own what He will. He asked that in the Scripture: *"Can I not do with my own what I will?"* The heathen said to David, "Now our gods are down here in our temples. We know where our gods are David; where is your God?" David said, *"Our God is in the heavens. Well what's He like David?"* Read **Psalm 115:1-4. Psalm 135:1-5.** *"Where's your God David?"* David said, *"Our God's in the heavens."*

What's He like? *"Our God hath done whatsoever He pleased, whatever the Lord pleased, the Lord; that did He in heaven, in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places."*

One time I read the concordance and I looked up to see what it had pleased God to do. David said, *"Whatsoever the Lord pleased that's what He did."* He said it twice in **Psalm 115** and **Psalm 135:** *"Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He."*

What did it please Him to do? Well, **1 Samuel 12:22** says: *"It pleased God to make you His people."* That's right; that's what it pleased God to do, to make you His people. You didn't deserve it and you didn't earn it.

And then in **Colossians 1:19** it says: *"It pleased God that in Christ should all fullness dwell."* Who put all fullness in Christ? The Father did. Who decreed Christ to be the Surety? The Father did.

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Who wrought the world and sent His Son to be the Saviour? The Father did. Who loved the world and gave His Son to be born of woman under the law? The Father did. It's all God's doings.

And then in **Isaiah 53:10**: *"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him."* Who sent Him to the cross of Calvary? The Father did. Who nailed Him to the cross? You say, "The Roman soldiers." I beg your pardon; *"They did what God determined before to be done."*

Yes, with wicked hands they crucified the Lord of glory, but they carried out the determinate council and foreknowledge of God. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He said, *"You don't take my life from me. I lay it down. No man has the power to take my life from me."* He said to Pilate, *"You couldn't have any power over me at all, except it were given you from above."*

It pleased God to reveal Christ to us. That's right, on our Damascus road to hell, just like old Saul of Tarsus, God stopped us and God unhorsed us and God humbled us and God brought us down, and God granted us repentance and faith. *"The goodness of God led you to repentance."*

"It pleased God to reveal Christ in me." That's what Paul said. *"And it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*

And here are the objects of grace, not the wise and prudent, not the smart-eleck, not the worldly-wise. Their pride would never allow them to cry for mercy. Their self-righteousness would never allow them to confess sin.

Their worldly-wisdom will never allow them to know nothing, to be children: *"Except you become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of God."* They know everything. They can't be taught. They'll never shut their mouths long enough to open their ears. They know everything.

And then these wise and prudent; their love of praise won't let them glorify God, but the babes; He revealed it to babes. Who are the babes, *"The poor in spirit?"* They are guilty and they seek forgiveness in Christ.

They're lost and they need a Saviour. They're poor, miserable and blind. But in Christ, sight, riches, all in Him, all that they need, they find in Him. They're nothing. They need all things. They're weak. They look to Him for strength. They are lost; they need His help and His mercy.

And here's the reason why God saved them; here's the reason: *"Even so Father, it seemed good in thy sight."* I thank you, I thank you Father that you've been pleased to hide these things from folks that wouldn't appreciate it anyway and you revealed it to a bunch of babies. Why, *"Because it seemed good in thy sight."*

Why did God save me? Why did He save you? Well ask the angel Gabriel. Gabriel will shake his head and say, "I can't give any answer except the one my Lord gave: It seemed good in His sight."

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And then our Lord closes this message with an invitation: “*Come unto me*” (not to the church, or to the front, or to the preacher) but, “*come unto me all ye that labor* (labor in the service of sin and heavy laden with a burden of guilt) *come to me and I will give you rest.*”

But don't miss Christ; don't stop short of Christ. Don't stop in the pool or at the table or the altar or to the front; get to Christ; He'll give you rest, He'll give you rest!