

Gratitude is a Focus Matter Matthew 11:1-11

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples 3 and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" PRAY

Years ago, when I was a youth pastor here at the church,

A)I remember sitting in the back one Sunday and thinking that the lighting in this sanctuary was so bad

B)because everyone looked blurry to me up on the stage.

C)I soon discovered that the problem wasn't with the lighting,

1)but it was with my eyes – a trip to the eye doctor revealed that I was nearsighted.

D)Being nearsighted means that you that you can't see things at a distance,

1)but you can only see what's right in front of you.

E)those who are nearsighted have a hard time seeing the big picture or the full picture of things.

Many Christians today suffer from spiritual nearsightedness

A)they don't see the big picture of what God is doing, but they only see what is right in front of them

B)and often times what is right in front of them is a difficult situation/ a problem

1)something that causes them to be discouraged and at times even doubt their faith.

C)And that is where we find John the Baptist in our text today.

Here is the big idea for today is: What you focus on will play a part in how you see God and how you see your situation.

A)Today we are going to see what we can learn about gratitude

B)from a low point in the life of John the Baptist

C)I have three points today

1. The problem with John's perspective
2. The answer from Jesus to John's perspective problem
3. The heart of Jesus toward John

#1 When we consider John the Baptist – His ministry, I think John would be the first to say: This didn't turn out the way I thought it was going to

A)Unique calling – Mother older Barren – Miraculous pregnancy

B)Calling to be the advance man of the Messiah – all of that was exciting

C)But he Finds himself not in the temple but out in the wilderness

1)Weird clothes – Camel hair coat and a strange diet – locust and honey

And now after several yrs Jesus is finally here – He is doing His thing – and John finds himself in Prison!

A)and this is when John starts to have perspective problems.

B)He is discouraged. He's no doubt thinking -I did everything that God wanted me to do and now I'm in prison.

C)So when two of his disciples come to visit him he sends them to go and find Jesus and ask him

1)are you the One – messiah Keep looking

D)Wait a minute: This is John who stood in the Jordan declaring there is one coming.... Sandal strap

1)John who declared – when Jesus came Behold.....who takes away.....

E)This is John who said to Jesus – I should not be baptizing you me

1)This is John who said – I must decrease

But now John is having 2nd thoughts – Go ask Jesus if he is the Christ or do we keep on looking

A)Why is John Doubting? – He is thinking – if Jesus is really the Messiah – why am I in Prison

B)Ever had thoughts like that? Lord if you really called me here – why is this so hard?

1)Why is this happening to me – or why isn't this taking place

C)Ever felt – Lord if you really loved me – why are you allowing this to happen to me?

Anyone one here – ever say something that you regretted? –

A)Uttered words that you wished you could take back?

B)Part of me wonders if John regretted sending his disciples on that mission?- TAKE IT BACK -

C)I wonder if after they left the prison if he wished he thought being so stupid

1)Jesus is going to be so disappointed in me. Dreaded their return

D)Of course John knew that Jesus was the Messiah. Well John is in his Dungeon of doubt - so he sends these two disciples to go and ask Jesus another

A)here is how I picture this going down

B)Excuse us Jesus – John remember him? Advance man - He sent us to ask you a question –

C)Just to be clear – this is his question – not our question

1)His question – are you the one..... another

D)So there we have the problem with John's perspective.

#2 The answer from Jesus to John's perspective problem

Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

Everything that Jesus spoke of were things that Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would do

A)But in a subtle way I also believe that Jesus saying to John –

Don't focus on what I am not doing – focus on what I am doing!

B)I think that is a good word for all of us to hear!

1)a good thing to learn to do –

C)Focus on what God has done and IS DOING – Instead of focusing on what He isn't doing

Consider the fact that you are saved!

A)That you were on your way to hell now, you are on your way to heaven

B)Where would you have ended up if Jesus hadn't rescued you?

C)I challenge you to take some time today or this week

1)write down those times in your life where you may be have been disappointed with God

D)I can probably count five or six times in my life where I felt disappointed with God

1)because God didn't do what I thought he was going to do

But that list is so small in comparison to the incredible blessings

A)That he has brought into my life

B)This past week FB did one of those reflections they sent out those reflections on your life.

C)A year in photos and it went through like 10 different photos of 10 different events

1)that happened in 2024

D)I was just blown away looking at these pictures and each one of them

1)was like a special time and memory and special people and incredible ministry opportunities

E)and I just found myself thanking God

But it is so easy to lose perspective. God isn't working

A)My life isn't making a difference.

B)Ten Pictures – THAT IS NOT TRUE.

1)OY VEY – SUCH AN IDIOT

C)Lord please forgive me.

Here is the Reality for each of us.

A)God has given us way more than we deserved.

B)He has blessed us far beyond what we could ever imagine.

C)Consider this list of what God has done for you and who you are in Christ

I am God's child (John 1:12)

I belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:20)

I have been justified (Romans 5:1)

I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)

I am a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20)

I am victorious (1 Corinthians 15:57)

I am born again (I Peter 1:23)

I am a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I am delivered (Colossians 1:13)

I am set free (Romans 8:2; John 8:32)

The First three Chapters of the book of Ephesians are three of my favorite chapters in the Bible

A)20 Plus in Christ or IN HIM statements

B)This is who you are in Jesus.

C)This is what you have to be thankful for today

1)Go home and meditate on these – I will mention a few

Ephesians 1:1 I am a saint.

Ephesians 1:3 I am blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Ephesians 1:7 I am redeemed and forgiven in Christ.

Ephesians 1:11 I have a wonderful inheritance of spiritual riches in Christ.

Ephesians 1:19-21 I have Resurrection power available to me because of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:10 I am God's workmanship - a masterpiece and a new creation - in Christ.

Ephesians 3:6 I am a partaker in the promises of God in Christ.

QUESTION: What are you focusing on?

A)Are you focused on who you are not ? – Failures

B)Or who you are in Jesus?

C)Focused on your current difficulty or your future Destiny?

D)Focused on what Jesus has done in your life – and what he is currently doing

1)Or are you focused on what he is not doing?

E)Are you in need of a perspective change today?

Note that Phrase: blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

A)The word offended comes from the Greek word Skandolon

B)we get our English word scandal or scandalized from this word.

C)And what it means in this context is to be displeased with

D)So Jesus is saying blessed is he who is not displeased with me.

So Jesus is saying to John and to us don't be displeased with me.

A)Because I'm not doing what you think I should be doing.

B)But KNOW this I am doing something great / something God glorifying in your life.

Living an unoffended life is living a life surrendered to His sovereignty, His mystery, and His love.

A)It is learning to say: Lord I am going to trust you and rejoice in what you are doing

B)And not focus on what you aren't doing

1)Or what I can't see you doing

C)In reality – always working behind the scenes

D)Song Waymaker: He is moving and working even when we can't see it

1)We need to remember that.

E)So Jesus response to John's Perspective problem is Don't focus on what I am not doing

1)Focus on what I am doing

#3 Notice Jesus' heart toward John.

A)After Jesus answers the question of John's disciples –

B)Jesus then - turns to the crowd to talk about John

C)v7 As they departed, Note this: Doesn't say after they left – gone – as they departed –

D)they are still in ear shot of what Jesus is going to say about John.

7 As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' 11 "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist;

It is my opinion these guys went back to John and said - Jesus answered your question.

A)Focus on what He is doing - He is doing everything - Isaiah the prophet said the Messiah would do

B)Focus on that - not that you are here –

C)But then John you should have heard what he said about you - He thinks you are amazing

D)In his eyes you were so faithful to your calling - he is so proud of you

E)In fact - He said among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist;

In Jesus' eyes - John was faithful to his Calling!

A)Guys listen: All that Jesus is looking for from any of us is this: BE FAITHFUL

B)Know this: Jesus thoughts toward you are good thoughts – future and a hope

1)Many thoughts – outnumber the sand

C)Beloved thoughts – not ashamed to call you his brethren – He will say – well done.....

D)His opinion is the only one that matters!

1)We serve for an audience of ONE

The Football player at Georgetown - First time my dad ever got to see me play

Close with this thought.

¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ~ Philippians 3:13-14