

## **Matt 11:16-19, 25-30 NLT (Pentecost study 6)**

*16 "To what can I compare this generation? It is like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, 17 'We played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn't mourn.'*

*18 For John didn't spend his time eating and drinking, and you say, 'He's possessed by a demon.' 19 The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!' But wisdom is shown to be right by its results." ...*

*25 At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the child-like. 26 Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!*

*27 "My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."*

*28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*

- Q.1. What might Jesus mean by 'this generation' v.16? Who does he liken them to?
- Q.2. What's Jesus' point in the little parable about children playing v.16f? Who do the children represent, and why mention weddings & funerals?
- Q.3. What do we know of John the Baptist? (see Matt 3:1-15; 11:1-15)
- Q.4. Why might the religious leaders and others accuse John of being possessed by a demon v.18?
- Q.5. What were they accusing Jesus of and why v.19?
- Q.6. By calling John & Jesus rude names, what were their accusers trying to do?
- Q.7. What does Jesus mean by '*wisdom is shown to be right by its results*' v.19?
- Q.8. What is significant in Jesus' prayer in v.25f?
- Q.9. What are 'these things' v.25 that Jesus thanks God for hiding from those who think themselves to be wise and clever? (see v.5)
- Q.10. Look up John 5:20, 26; 6:40; 10:35-36; 14:13. How do these add to the picture Jesus paints in v.27 of his relationship with his Father and what that means?
- Q.11. Why were many people in Jesus' day 'weary and heavenly burdened'? What's Jesus' alternative?
- Q.12. How did a 'yoke' work? What does Jesus mean by his yoke being 'easy' v.30?
- Q.13. What are the 3 ways the weary can begin to experience Jesus' rest in vv.28ff?

### **Application: for reflection, prayer and action**

- Q.14. How can we avoid the mistake of the religious leaders Jesus describes in v.16f?
- Q.15. How should we begin our praises and prayers c.f. v25; Matt 6:9?
- Q.16. Are you more like the 'wise & clever' or the 'child-like' v25?
- Q.17. Rewrite vv.28-30 in words that might help you memorise them.

**Matt 11:16-19, 25-30** (my suggested answers)

**NB.** Please answer the questions yourself. We all have different ways of answering; God may give you greater insights than mine. Put '*John thinks*' ... before each answer.

Q.1. Jesus probably means the religious leaders (RL) and those who blindly follow them. He likens them to bored children.

Q.2. He likens the religious leaders to bored children refusing his and John's invitations. Jesus is playing merry wedding songs while John played funeral dirges.

Q.3. John was a key forerunner to Jesus – preaching about social justice and calling everyone to repent and be baptised. He lived a rugged, austere lifestyle and Jesus hailed him as a great Elijah-like Prophet.

Q.4. The RL accused John (and Jesus) of being possess because they were extraordinarily popular and were vocal critics of the status-quo led by the RL.

Q.5. The RL accused Jesus of partying with society's riff-raff and, along with them, of being a glutton and drunk. This is because Jesus enthusiastically welcomed all types (esp riff-raff) and refused to condemn them.

Q.6. Name calling is a way of dismissing the ideas and teachings of someone who disagrees with you. Jesus' opponents often did this.

Q.7. This proverb suggests that Jesus and John's teaching and actions speak for themselves – they reveal God's wisdom.

Q.8. Jesus' prayer begins by addressing God as Father (very unusual) then affirming things about God worth praising (Lord of heaven & earth) and seeing God's hand-work in history (revealing and concealing).

Q.9. The things Jesus means are the things of v.5f. These are dismissed by the RL.

Q.10. The verses in John and v.27 reveal the intimacy between Jesus (the Son) and God (the Father). These are foundational for our salvation (through the Son – drawn to believe by the Father) and for the later doctrine of the trinity.

Q.11. Many were weary & burdened in two ways: Roman oversight & taxes; the RL imposition of rules for piety & social acceptance.

Q.12. A yoke links two oxen together – enabling them to share the load and pull together. Jesus', being a good and gentle guide, invites us to take on his yoke = his way of living and direction. It is easy to bear but challenging to live by.

Q.13. The weary are invited to do 3 things to experience Jesus' rest: i. come to him (i.e commit to daily following him); ii. Learn from him (as our Teacher); iii. Take on his yoke (for support and guidance).

Q.14. We can avoid the mistakes of the RL by doing the 3 things of v.29f (Q.13).

Q.15. Our prayers should always start with focus on God and his actions before we come to our requests.

Q.16. Your own answer.

Q.17. You own words 'e.g. 'Come follow me' invites Jesus, 'especially if you are stressed or face hardships. I will walk alongside you to help you find peace and a new direction.'