

The Heart of Christ (Matthew 11:20-30)

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[0 : 0 0] Matthew chapter 11 20 to 30 then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles have been performed because they did not repent woe to you to your eyes and woe to you beside her for if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon they would have represented long repented long ago and sat cloth and ashes but I tell you this will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you and you captain am will you be lifted to the heavens no you will go down to Hades for if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom it would have remained to this day but I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you at that time Jesus said I praise you father lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children yes father for this is what you are pleased to do all things have been committed to me by my father no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light hi how's everyone going can you hear me okay thank you so much Ella for reading that it was so good to hear a bit of your story thank you for sharing um yeah and I think a lot of us can resonate or relate to how following Jesus can be a sacrifice um it can be a challenge um but I'm so glad to know um yeah a bit more of your story thank you so much uh good to see everyone uh I'd love to pray for us but before that um just a reminder that uh we have been going through the series uh through Matthew's gospel uh if you have missed out a week or you just it was just too hard to focus uh fear not uh take heart have courage uh and and go on Spotify and you can catch up on you know a sermon that you missed out on yeah and so we'd love to be able to just uh encourage one another right as um Venus prayed earlier as this as the day of Jesus return uh draws nearer so uh I commend that to you um and how about let's uh pray before we uh have a deeper look into this passage that Ella read for us now would you pray with me our great God and Father thank you so much for Jesus the fact that he represents you he is um your image your glory thank you so much that where we would not be able to know you at all because of Jesus we can know what you're like thank you for revealing him to many of us and Father many of us are weary and burdened help us to find rest for our souls in you today as we hear through your spirit from your word i pray all these things in your son's most precious name amen i'd love to uh try uh get you guys to all imagine uh that that Cheryl my wife uh has been sending me

messages right uh one of them says this um hey can you get two cans of tomatoes beef mints frozen peas and a block of cheese thanks sounds fairly straightforward all right and now imagine if um Cheryl sent me a message like this hi i'm stuck in Scotland and my ATM card stopped working can you help me call this number thank you sir now i want to ask you all right this is an iq test obviously which one is the scam um feel free to type it in chat or just shout it out um the first one obviously thank you Vincent obviously you know my wife very well no yeah yeah it's number two isn't it um any one of you who knows Cheryl knows that she doesn't like Scotland it's actually Finland and that's not her actual number anyways so it can't be number two um yeah so that i think that would be the scam how about this next one though which of these texts would you trust i put them up side by side you know one is pretty clear you know says this is your netcode don't show it to anyone else and then the other one says warning your account has suspicious activity urgently visit this link which would you pick as the scam and which would you say was legit maybe you'd struggle a bit more but maybe if you knew your bank well you'd be able to sniff out the scam right and i think even more so if you know jesus well you will be able to tell when you've fallen for a scam about jesus because i've been thinking about this week i think most of us have had to

encounter or have been presented um scams about jesus before i mean i think i know most of us have heard the facts about what he's done we have all kinds of things that we know of jesus you know he he lived on this earth he died on a cross for our sins he rose again i mean we know what he's done but who is jesus what is his very nature and being you know if you could kind of peel under his skin what would we see and i think if we're honest i think a lot of us would find it quite hard to ask and answer that question all right who is jesus really and perhaps perhaps when we don't know so well who jesus is what his heart is we might fall for scams about him i don't know if you've ever fallen for the scam maybe you've fallen for the scam that jesus is kind of like my not one one one operator you know i just call him when it's an emergency but you know i don't really have a relationship with the person on the phone when i call one one one i just talk to them for what i need right i wonder if that's the jesus you've fallen for the scam jesus or what about the jesus is my tiger parent scam i don't know maybe uh you've lived in a household where you've been hearing do this or obey this or don't do this all your life and so your picture of jesus is kind of like an angry parent like a rubber band about to snap maybe jesus seems to be like someone who's about to spoil your fun or who scolds you when you fail who is just one wrong move away from walking away from you i wonder if you've fallen for that kind of scam before well i think we have to thank god then for his wonderful word because in this part of matthew's gospel and this these beautiful words we come face to face i think with the real jesus i think here he speaks directly to all of us who are weary and who are burdened and who are tired all of us who have fallen at one stage along the way here is the real jesus in this passage and i think if we get to know this jesus and this jesus alone then i think he will help us to stand up against the other scams and we won't fall for the other scams about jesus now did you know out of all four gospels okay matthew mark luke and john eyewitness accounts there's 89 chapters of text so that's a lot of text to go through right but out of these four gospels it's this passage here right matthew 11 20 to 30 where we find the one and only time when jesus speaks about his own heart did you see that when ella read that okay in verse 29 for i am gentle and humble in heart no other place in matthew's gospel or anywhere else do we hear that kind of statement so i think there is no better place to encounter to to look for the real jesus than this passage here and maybe jesus has been your constant bubble companion this lockdown or maybe right now he feels as distant as squares on a screen but here jesus says come look beyond my profile pic come and discover who i am come and see my heart for you um so let's dive in let's dive into this wonderful passage before we do that i want to clarify briefly uh what the bible means when it says heart okay so when we watch a lot of rom-coms and k-dramas um the term heart feels like you know romantic sappy uh or if you're a medical person the heart is a is a four-chambered muscle that pumps blood through your body uh in the bible the heart when it talks about the heart it's referring to something more abstract it's more the real you the core of who you and i are and that's what the bible means when it talks about the heart what defines and directs you for example problems can speak about the heart being the wellspring of life and it's not talking specifically about a part of your body physically but the real you and so this is what jesus is doing here he's not talking about a part of his body he's talking about who he really is when jesus reveals his heart what drives him what is it what is most true of him i think in this passage we get three different looks into the heart of christ and we see it in our passage we see firstly from verses 20 to 24 a heart that shames the unrepentant and then later on we see a heart that knows the father's will and finally a heart that is gentle and lowly and offers rest to the weary so we'll walk through each of these points uh briefly uh briefly and so if you're the note-taking type feel free to jot something down or type it up on your screen um yeah let's let's let's look firstly at the heart of jesus here is jesus who who shames the heart of heart i wonder when you heard uh those names of cities being judged what you thought what did you make of jesus uh denouncing the cities here in verse 20 uh surely god is love he is but here we see straight away the love of christ is not a mushy romantic song kind of love you see jesus he is tender he is gentle to those who see their need for him and yet he is stern and strong to those who reject him isn't he and we've seen this we've seen this through the series right all through chapters eight and nine of matthew's gospel we've seen a man like no other i mean right back to matthew 8 chapter 1 remember that large crowds followed him and then when he camped out at someone's house many who were demon possessed they were brought to him and sometimes he left the crowds though to get to certain people right like the men in the tombs like like jairus's daughter other times he finds them jesus actually went through all the towns and villages right matthew 9 35 teaching in their synagogues preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness and

yet as he did all that something happened well actually maybe we could say something didn't happen that should have and verse 20 Jesus tells us Jesus began it says here to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed because they did not repent they did not repent and so firstly I think the first thing we realize is that Jesus he has a very different heart towards those who reject him as particularly those who reject him despite seeing his mighty power at work Jesus is he's not like a dog who's gonna wait and wait and wait as his owner abuses and mistreats him that's not how he works think about it the crowds of Khorazin and Capernaum these are all the villages that Jesus was ministering and they got to see living proof that Jesus had God's authority to heal to save they got they got the VIP access to God's himself through Jesus and yet they did not repent they did not turn from where they were going and start following him seriously and we also need to remember though that this is actually not his first reaction to the crowds in Galilee remember the first thing that he felt towards them was not denouncing them the first thing he felt towards them was compassion so remember that's a starting point Jesus had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd okay so we want to hold this in balance but imagine this imagine a shepherd risks his life to climb down some cliffs for example to pull a lost sheep from disaster imagine that imagine that he carries and nurses a week and a dying sheep back to life after it's been attacked and then imagine that sheep then going down that cliff again wandering to the walls again or imagine a doctor who comes and saves a whole town from from a poisonous water supply but then as soon as they're healed as soon as they're out of you know their sick beds they head straight for the deadly water again Jesus is saying woe to you for not repenting it's almost the opposite of what we heard from John the Baptist last week right um we heard from him blessed uh when Jesus talked to John the Baptist he said blessed are you are those who don't fall away and now though he's saying the opposite woe to you for not repenting and Jesus he points out that if Tyre and Sidon and Sodom these were cities in the Old Testament who experienced God's judgment you

can read it in Ezekiel 27 and 28 for example if they could have seen Jesus himself at work they would have repented when more is revealed more is at stake when more is revealed more is at stake so I don't know how we feel about this PCBC some of us have heard the good news of Jesus many many times maybe some of you have grown up in in Sunday school right heard all these truths the Bible says that the key is not how many miracles you've seen how many truths you've confronted about God how much church you've done how much of the crowd you've been a part of the Bible says what counts most of all is whether you have repented or whether you did not repent whether you have turned and trusted Jesus or whether you are still going your own way and it seems like those who have tasted his grace and then rejected it that they actually are worse off than even the city of Sodom friends that is a terrifying place to be woe to us if we have seen and experienced the miracle of of a true Christian community but then we reject the Jesus who makes this community and dies for her I think woe to us if we have friends who we know are Christians who radiate Christ's love and yet we refuse to follow him ourselves woe to us if we know Christ died for sinners like us and yet we refuse to lay down our lives and follow him I think from this part of this this part of Matthew we have to be clear when God shows up none of us can be neutral about him I think with God there is no ticking interested or maybe later we either say yes or no to following Jesus either he is Lord of all or he's not at all and it is either heaven or hell that lies before us the Bible says the Lord is compassionate and gracious he forgives the wicked and yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished so don't be called by a scam here is Jesus who shames the heart of heart what do we make in the next section then let me read this next section for you from verse 25 it says this at that time Jesus said I praise you Father Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children yes Father this was your good pleasure I notice who truly sees according to Jesus right it's not the wise and learned that's not a deal against those of you studying for exams and assignments look when he talks about wise and learned he's referring to those who were the religious leaders who knew their Bibles inside and out and yet failed to recognize that Jesus was the promised one and then even oppose him and we hear more about that in the next few weeks these these leaders they they saw the truth about Jesus they could not deny who he was and yet they don't follow him whereas the ones who do follow him are those who are kind of like children in their faith who have a childlike trust in him you think about the woman who

[20 : 16] who bled for 12 years or or the paralyzed man and his friends these were the kinds of people who who came to Jesus right but in verse 27 Jesus reveals something more about himself his

own heart have a look at verse 27 all things have been committed to me by my father no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him friends the here is jesus who knows the father's heart here is jesus who knows the father's heart i want you to think about it think about how bold jesus saying something like this is you know back in his day right he lived in a time when people believed in all kinds of gods around him right um the nation of judea was a roman colony at the time and the romans believed in all kinds of gods the jewish people they believed in in one god and then here comes a first century itinerant preacher who says i know god and no one else knows him that's essentially what he says in this verse right and i wonder if you've ever heard uh john 14 verse 6 jesus he gives a similar statement he says i'm the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me this kind of jesus is the only way message it it runs against the message we normally hear in society today doesn't it perhaps you've heard um uh this from non-christian friends or family you know just go and believe in your god uh i'll stick with mine you know what's the problem or maybe some of you who have non-christian parents they've told you it's okay you believe what you want but that's not for me or maybe you've met someone who actually has said to you well all gods are the same you know they all lead to the same place what you believe i think i can see that in what other people believe too that's okay so how do we how do we respond to something like that is this true i wonder if you've heard the story of the elephant uh the elephant that walks into a village and in this village apparently everyone is blind and so one villager touches the elephant's leg you know and says oh this elephant's kind of like a tree another touches the elephant's ear and says oh this elephant it's like a fan and the atheist maybe misses the elephant with their hands and say oh there's no elephant here all these people because they were blind they could not see the whole elephant and so so the story goes that's what religion is like all right so maybe why don't we just learn from each other and that way we'll get more of the truth about god that way have you heard that story um have you heard that told before or a version of it but here's why the elephant story doesn't work first the story begins with an assumption right it assumes the storyteller can see everything and the the villagers can't so actually to use the story you're actually saying everyone else is blind and i can see and i don't know about you but i don't think i could say that and i think that would be very right or respectful and secondly i think the story cannot explain why people might change their religious beliefs how do you explain how someone becomes a christian for example and when we do that we're saying what we used to believe wasn't true right and then one more issue is that different religions i think at the

end of it they don't see things as part of the same animal the more you hear what they describe about who they believe or what they believe about god i think they describe different animals altogether but what if instead of sending an elephant god sends himself what if god writes himself into our world through the incarnation through the word becoming flesh and living among us jesus jesus who can open our blind eyes to see who can calm storms who can heal broken lives who can teach with authority who can draw some in and drive others away jesus who forgives sinners if our question is this can we truly know god jesus's answer is right here in verse 27 yes but only through me and friends if this is true then it would be foolish to go to anyone else to get to know god to know him deeper there are thousands of experts out there right you can just google and answer to your question whether it's how to make um cake and lock down whether it's how to fix a broken washing machine there are teachers and youtubers there are ted talk presenters there are people with lots of titles in front of their names some may help you most probably many won't but to truly know god jesus is who we ultimately must turn to some people get curious about this first they they they look at it and they go oh who does the son choose to reveal himself to uh here we talk about an issue called a predestination and for some people this is a really difficult topic please don't get hung up about whether the son has chosen to to reveal himself to you or not as it this verse seems to indicate because we know from the very next verse here that jesus jesus is not trying to be selective and choosing who knows god and who doesn't right because what does the very next verse and this very next point tell us have a look verse 28 says this come to me all you who are weary and burdened and i will give you rest here is jesus who is gentle and lowly in heart who invites us to find rest in him verse 29 take my yoke upon you and learn from me for i am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light it's one thing right to describe um maybe what your boyfriend or girlfriend's height is or their hairstyle what their work habits their favorite game their myers briggs i think it'd be much harder but more

important to describe and try and get what their heart for you is like right surely if you're if you're someone who has a girlfriend or boyfriend you you don't want to just know facts about them you want to know what their heart for you is like right so it is with Jesus first notice his invitation he says come to me he invites us to to come to him for all his authority and power no king in this history of the world is as approachable as King Jesus I mean think about it if you want to speak to an mp you probably have to find out a form and fill it out or find some way to get in touch book in with his assistant or her assistant if you want to go see Jacinda our prime minister you probably have to get past her security guards first right her dps her protection squad not so with Jesus Jesus is the only requirement for you to come close to me it's just to open yourself up to him he invites you to find rest in him as a gift not as something you buy or gain access to notice his invitation secondly I think in this passage notice to his audience who is he talking to all you who are weary and burdened not the unrepentant like in verse 20 not the unbelieving pharisees and religious leaders in the next chapter there is actually no invitation to them to come to him if you have a burden if you're weighed down then you are uniquely qualified to come to Jesus if you have been tired of from lockdown if you have family pressures and hurts if you have a fear of failure whatever else your burden is Jesus says come to me and I will give you rest and now we want to understand right Jesus is not saying come to me for an easy carefree life he has not said that in our previous chapters he's already made this clear his followers are called to a deeper righteousness he said on the sermon on the mount and he offers not cheap grace but costly grace the Christian life is hard work our bodies do grow weary and yet verse 29 says you will find rest for your souls and how does this rest come this rest comes when Jesus says we take his yoke upon us and learn from him now what's the yoke um most of us have never worked on a farm or lived so here's a picture of a farmer and can you see that crossbar that sits between the two oxen that's a yoke that's a yoke it's this heavy crossbar that that uh ties the ox together oxen together and lets them be able to do the work of plowing a field the things that we would use tractors for today that's the yoke and so Jesus is using this metaphor this picture this image but what we often fail to realize when we read this passage is that we are already carrying a yoke without Jesus we are already under a burden right whether it's a burden of man-made expectations a burden of maybe your bucket list that you're trying to live by but you you can never achieve anyways whether it's the burden or the yoke of all kinds of worries these burdens they torture our minds they they weigh us down and so actually Jesus has a kind of ironic statement here take my yoke instead which is easy in verse 30 it says my yoke is easy my burden is light the word easy here um that's what I says here in the niv the word easy shows up somewhere else actually in the bible I wonder if some of you remembered Ephesians chapter 4 uh verse 32 where it said be kind to one another tenderhearted right forgiving one another as Christ forgave you that word be kind to one another that is the same word that appears here when it says my yoke is easy can you see Jesus is saying that my burden it's actually an easy burden it's actually a kind burden right whoever heard of a kind easy burden me Jesus his yoke it's a non-yoke his burden it's a non-burden and you have a fellowship with him it's like carrying a helium balloon and being weighed down by one when he embraces you it's like a drowning man who grabs the burden of a life jacket friends his yoke is easy when you and I come to Jesus again and again we do not pick up a burden we are swapping yokes we're putting off the man-made yoke for Jesus's yoke Dietrich Bonhoeffer a German Christian he put it this way in his book the cost of discipleship he says this in discipleship and following Jesus people come from the harsh yoke of their own laws disciples under the gentle yoke of Jesus Christ to take it up Jesus loves to care for you he longs to carry you he cannot help doing anything else this is what comes from his very heart this is the real Jesus right that's what he says notice look notice his heart Jesus says you can take my yoke because verse 29 I am gentle and humble in heart this first word that's been translated here as gentle we've actually seen before I wonder if some of you remembered last year from the sermon on the mount where Jesus said blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth that word meek is the same word here or Jesus later in Matthew 21 he describes himself as the king who is coming to you humble mounted on a donkey or and and in the book of first Peter the apostle says to wives and encourages them in first Peter 3 verse 4 to foster the imperishable beauty of a gentle and a quiet spirit meek humble and gentle that is what is at Jesus's heart and the second word there and his phrase gentle and humble and the word humble we see in in the book of James some of you have heard this in Saturday service or Sunday morning God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble right it's not the stars and celebs but the the socially unimpressive that God gives grace to and the point and Jesus

saying humble here i am gentle and humble is that he's saying he's at our level he is accessible he's the kind of king that will walk among his people i think if we're honest many of us we're not used to this kind of this kind of jesus maybe you and i maybe you've grown up in a in a rules heavy home okay all your life even as a christian even as growing up with christian parents maybe you've just heard do this and do that you know maybe you've been criticized for never measuring up so maybe when you think of jesus you've got this kind of warped view of him some kind of harsh distant person arms folded that's not jesus right because what does he say i am gentle and humble and heart there's an author jane ortland he has a book a whole book on this called gentle and lowly and he says this he says jesus he is not trigger happy he is not harsh he's not reactionary he's not easily exasperated jesus is the most understanding person in the universe the posture that is most natural to

jesus is not a pointed finger but open arms the world where an unclean man says if you're willing cleanse me jesus says i'm willing right his deepest desire is to bless the broken remember the special word he said to the paralyzed man what was it he said take heart my child sins are forgiven right these are words of assurance and courage when he looks at the crowds his heart swells of compassion when he thinks of jerusalem when he sees his dead friend lazarus tears well in his eyes jesus is the kind of guy who sees pain and others and it draws out his own tears and when jesus dies on the cross the sinners there we see his heart his love for us on full display hebrews 12 chapter 2 says this for the joy set before him jesus endured the cross he despised the shame and is seated at the right hand of god can you see friends jesus as he hung there as he was stripped naked as he was lashed on his back as his hands were pierced as he takes our yoke of sin and death our burden of shame and guilt on the cross he had joy set before him his heart yearned for those who would come to him it was not just nails that held him there it was his love it was his gentle and lowly heart his very heart there was no display that is greater than that of his heart than at the cross and so friends i want to argue if you want to go deeper into following jesus then you need to know and understand his heart if you cannot see his heart for you that is gentle and humble you may never go deeper into following jesus you may only know a scam version a cheapened version of jesus the bible is clear look one day every knee bows before jesus he's perfect and power and authority one day he rides in with a sword in his hand man to conquer and yet first and foremost from his very words his heart for you is gentle and humble and i think this reflects and this spills into how we do church i think how can we ever grow as a church if we fail to see his heart if we fail to live it out this gentleness this humbleness if we make our church all about performance duty achievement that's not in jesus's heart when our hearts are moved by power and pride being better than the other person that is not in jesus's heart and we miss his heart and we miss the lonely among us those who are outcasts those who are lost and those who are loved by jesus so friends don't fall for the scam jesus all right here is the real jesus he shames the unrepentant he knows the father's heart and he is gentle and lowly in heart and so the final obvious question is this will you come to him will you stop chasing elsewhere will you bring all your burdens to him will you exchange your heavy yoke with his light yoke your burdens with his light and easy one come to him learn from

[40 : 34] him and follow him and follow him let's pray you