

# Hard Questions

## Matthew 11

Pastor Art Hunt

October 1-2, 2016

**Big-Picture Truth:** Whether our questions are answered or not, our difficulties are meant to draw us close to Jesus.

### Question #1: **WHY ISN'T GOD CLEAR? or WHY DON'T I RECEIVE A SIGN?**

*So when Jesus had finished giving instructions to the twelve disciples, he went away from there to teach and preach in their towns. <sup>2</sup>Meanwhile, John, who was in prison, heard about these messianic goings-on. He sent word through his own followers. <sup>3</sup>Are you the one who is coming?" he asked. "Or should we be looking for someone else?" <sup>4</sup>"Go and tell John," replied Jesus, "what you've seen and heard. <sup>5</sup>Blind people are seeing! Lame people are walking! Lepers are being cleansed! Deaf people can hear again! The dead are being raised to life! And—the poor are hearing the good news! <sup>6</sup>And God bless you if you're not upset by what I'm doing." Matthew 11:1-6 (N.T. Wright)*

(See also Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1 and John 12:37.)

### Question #2: **WHY DON'T I GET BLESSED LIKE OTHER PEOPLE?**

*As the messengers were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John. "What were you expecting to see," he asked, "when you went out into the desert? A reed wobbling in the wind?" <sup>8</sup>No? Well, then, what were you expecting to see? Someone dressed in silks and satins? I you want to see people like that you'd have to go to somebody's royal palace. <sup>9</sup>All right, so what were you expecting to see? A prophet? Ah, now we're getting there: yes, indeed, and much more than a prophet! <sup>10</sup>This is the one the Bible was talking about when it says, 'See, I'm sending my messenger ahead of you and he will clear your path before you. <sup>11</sup>I'm telling you the truth: John the Baptist is the greatest mother's son there ever was. But even the least significant person in heaven's kingdom is greater than he. Matthew 11:7-11 (N.T. Wright)*

"In a few simple words, Jesus is telling his hearers that Israel's long history, from Abraham and Moses through the prophets to the present moment, was one long preparation, one long getting-ready time. Now the preparation was over, and the reality had dawned. John was indeed the greatest among the preparers, but even the most insignificant person who was accepting God's kingdom and living by it—in other words, who was hearing Jesus and following him—was 'greater,' simply because they were living in the time of fulfillment." (From *Matthew for Everyone* by N.T. Wright)

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go . . .”<sup>20</sup>Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them . . .”<sup>21</sup>When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”<sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!” John 21:18, 20-22 (English Standard Version)*

### **Question #3: WHY DOES JESUS SAY THAT FOLLOWING HIM IS EASY WHEN IT IS SO OBVIOUSLY HARD?!**

*My father gave me everything: nobody knows the son except the father, and nobody knows the father except the son—and anyone the son wants to reveal him to.<sup>28</sup>“Are you having a real struggle? Come to me! Are you carrying a big load on your back? Come to me—I’ll give you rest.<sup>29</sup>Pick up my yoke and put it on; take lessons from me, I’ll be gentle with you! The last thing in my heart is to give you a hard time. You’ll see—rest you need and rest you shall have.<sup>30</sup>My yoke is easy to wear, my load is easy to bear.” Matthew 12:28-30 (N.T. Wright)*

- The “easy yoke” = intimate union with the Triune God
- The secret of the “easy yoke” = doing life in close relationship with Jesus and slowly learning to live as He lived