

Perceiving the Truth
May 20, 2020

It is clear that some people follow Jesus today and some don't. During his ministry, Jesus attracted crowds but the religious leaders opposed him as did many of the cities where he did his miracles (Matthew 11:20-24).

The question I want to ask you to consider is, Why do some people follow Jesus and some don't? One good answer is that some people "get it" and others don't. Another good answer is that, even if they "get it" (in some degree), some *don't want to* follow him. But tonight I want us to focus in on the matter of "getting it." Why is it that some people get it and some don't? What is involved in "perceiving" the truth?

1. Read Matthew 13:11-15. What do you think Jesus is saying overall in these verses?

The quotation from Isaiah in vv. 14-15 could be taken to mean that he does not want us to turn (repent) and be healed, but I don't think that is the case. I think it may be irony. Regardless, what words or phrases are used to describe what would need to happen in order for people to turn to God to be healed? (we'll call these people "open-hearted").

What words are used to describe the actual condition of the people Jesus is referring to that keeps them from turning to God to be healed? (we'll call these people "dull").

Which group of words best describes *you*?

What do you think determines which of these two groups a person will be in?

2. Read Matthew 16:5-12. Notice the word "perceive" in v. 9, which also occurred in the previous reading. In this account, which group are the disciples in initially—dull or open-hearted?

Which group did they end up in?

What did Jesus do to help them move from one group to the other?

Did they have a role in moving to the other group?

3. Read Matthew 11:25-28. What is needed in order to perceive God's truths according to Jesus' words here?
4. What do you think he means by "little children?"
5. What is needed in order to enter the kingdom of heaven according to Matthew 18:1-5? (Apparently Jesus is not referring to some quality children possess but to their lack of status. Note how the NIV translates v. 4.)
6. Read Matthew 23:1-12. The religious leaders clearly didn't "get it." Jesus again tells the key in vv. 11-12. What is it?
7. Not surprisingly, Jesus **is** what he is wanting us to be. What quality or qualities of Jesus do you see in Matthew 11:28; 21:5?
8. I have tried to lead you to some answers about why some people "get it" and others don't. I have been a little bit indirect pointing you to the Scriptures without stating the answers too overtly. Based on what you have read tonight, what would you say is the key to perceiving the truths Jesus teaches? If you aren't sure or want to discuss it, email me marvin@nwchurch.us

What is something you need to do in light of this discovery? Will you?