

# Matthew 11 - Scandalized by the Message part 1: The Scandal of the Gospel Causes Some to Ignore It

To Read:

1. Malachi 3-4
2. I Corinthians 1:18-31

## I. Introduction

### A. This morning, we are starting the 3rd section of Matthew in chapters 11-13, but first, let's review where we've been

1. Matthew began with the Beginnings of the Kingdom, in Matthew 1-7, which culminated in the Sermon on the Mount
  - a. Matthew announces Jesus as the heir of David and the heir of Abraham, tracing Jesus' genealogy and the inheritance of the promises made to Abraham and David
    - i. Matthew introduces Jesus as the promised King for the nation of Israel
    - ii. Jesus is the one who will inherit the promises and fulfill the kingdom
  - b. And then Matthew develops his introduction of Jesus by tying Jesus to Moses as well
    - i. Jesus story followed Moses story, from His birth, His flight to Egypt, His return, passing through the water and the wilderness and going up the mountain to give the law
    - ii. Not only is Jesus the king, He is also the deliverer, the one who will bring us into the kingdom
  - c. So the Sermon on the Mount introduces Jesus' kingdom and describes what it's like
    - i. His kingdom is different than the kingdoms of the world, because it is focused on Him, He is it's center
    - ii. So His disciples will not seek after the things of this world, but will be satisfied in Jesus alone
2. Matthew continues with the Gospel of the Kingdom, in chapters 8-10, which culminates in the Sending of the Twelve
  - a. As Jesus comes down the Mountain, He not only claims that He is the king of His kingdom, He explains how we can enter His kingdom - we can only enter the kingdom through His healing work through His deliverance
  - b. So Jesus' healings and miracles work together to display the gospel and He calls men to follow Him
  - c. Then Jesus sends out His twelve disciples to keep preaching this message - the message that Jesus is here to heal and renew all things, the message that Jesus is calling all to follow Him

### B. As we start into the third section of Matthew, we start to see the response to Jesus' message

1. And we might expect that people will embrace Jesus' message - if He is the king and He is welcoming us into His kingdom, who would not rejoice at the summons?
  - a. But this isn't what happens - instead, almost everyone who hears the message turns away, Israel rejects her king and deliverer - some simply ignore His message and others outright hate His message
  - b. But in Matthew 11-12, no one responds well to Jesus' message, everyone rejects it somehow
2. This is the story of Matthew, the story of Matthew is how the King came to Israel, but Israel rejected her King, so the King called out a new people, a new Israel and established them as His kingdom
  - a. In Matthew 11-12 we are going to see the culmination of Israel's rejection of her King, the rejection that was hinted at when the scribes and priests told the wise men to go to Bethlehem, the rejection that was hinted at when Jesus healed the paralytic and the scribes thought He was blaspheming, the rejection that was hinted at when the Pharisees questioned Jesus on why He ate with sinners and tax collectors
  - b. In Matthew 8-10, Jesus preaches a message of healing and restoration, repentance and forgiveness, but in Matthew 11-12, Israel rejects that message - from here on out, Israel in general, represented by the Scribes and the Pharisees, will reject Jesus' message and Jesus will reject them
3. And this section culminates with chapter 13, the parables, where Jesus explains what is going on
  - a. Israel is scandalized by the message, Israel rejects the message, but Jesus is not surprised nor is He defeated
  - b. In fact, Jesus planned for this to happen, this is according to His purpose to display His kingdom

### C. So, I've titled this section of Matthew, "Scandalized by the Message" and we'll look at it in three parts

1. First, we'll look at Matthew 11 and see that some ignore the message
2. Then we'll look at Matthew 12 and see that some hate the message
3. Finally, we'll look at Matthew 13 and see Jesus explain the scandal of the gospel

### D. This week we're starting with the first part: Some Ignore the Message

1. Proposition: the cares of this world can cause us to miss the gospel of Christ, so we must set aside ourselves and embrace the scandal of Jesus
  - a. The world is scandalized by the gospel
  - b. Jesus welcomes the scandal of the gospel
  - c. We must embrace the scandal of the gospel

## II. The World is Scandalized by the Gospel

### A. Scandalized by the cost of the Gospel

Matthew 11:2-6 - *Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."*

1. John the Baptist and his disciples are the first group in Matthew to be scandalized by the gospel
  - a. The title comes from verse 6 - *blessed is the one who is not offended [scandalizo/scandalized] by me*
  - b. It is interesting that John and his disciples are the first group here, because they should have been better prepared than anyone to receive Jesus' message, and they seem to understand 95% of the message
  - c. But what they didn't understand is why John ended up in prison and why Jesus didn't seem to be doing anything about it - they understood the message, but they were scandalized by suffering
2. John had preached a message of coming judgment, a conquering kingdom that would destroy its enemies
  - a. Matthew 3:10 - *Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*
  - b. But John's situation didn't seem to match John's preaching - when Jesus shows up, John gets thrown in prison, John's message, instead of being part of a conquering kingdom, just got him thrown in jail
  - c. And, when John heard about Jesus' actions in prison, they didn't seem to match John's expectation either
  - d. Jesus was supposed to be bringing judgment and destruction on unfaithful Israel, but instead, Jesus is walking around the countryside healing people - this wasn't what John had signed up for
  - e. The conquering victory of the Gospel that John preached seemed to have failed and it cost John dearly, causing Him to wonder, even to doubt - Is Jesus really the messiah, or should I be looking for someone else?
3. Jesus' answer to John's disciples says, "you've been blinded by your suffering, this is the way it is supposed to be - we are a conquering kingdom, even if you can't see it"
  - a. Jesus answers John with a list of what He has been doing, which is kind of an interesting answer
    - i. John knew what Jesus was doing - the passage starts, "*Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ.*" - Jesus isn't telling John something new, He's telling him to think about what he's heard
    - b. Jesus is calling John to think about what the Messiah should be doing by pointing back to prophecy
      - i. Jesus' reply is a mash-up of several prophecies, primarily Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 61
      - ii. Isaiah 35:4-6 - *Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*
      - iii. Isaiah 61:1-2 - *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn*
  - c. Both of these prophecies deal with the vengeance of God, the judgment of God ready to destroy the evildoer
    - i. But the core of these prophecies says the vengeance of God will be mixed with the mercy of God, a mercy that is displayed in a ministry of healing, a ministry of restoration
    - ii. Jesus says that the mercy of the gospel is its victory and suffering doesn't deny its victory - the gospel's victory happens through a message of mercy
4. Ultimately, Jesus is telling John that His suffering isn't a result of a failure of the gospel
  - a. Mercy to sinners displayed in Jesus' healing ministry is the ultimate victory, a victory that is worth suffering for
  - b. It is easy to be scandalized by suffering, to think that our suffering means that the gospel has somehow failed, but Jesus says that this isn't the case - the gospel's victory is testified to every time the dead are raised to life
  - c. In a way, Jesus is telling John to look beyond his temporal situation and see that the gospel is conquering - John's suffering isn't the last word of the gospel - Jesus' ministry is victory

## B. Scandalized by the message of the Gospel

Matthew 11:16-19 - *"But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, "'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."*

1. After answering John's disciples, Jesus turns and addresses the crowd
  - a. In verses 7-15, Jesus holds up John, despite his doubts, as the true herald of the Kingdom of Heaven
  - b. And, although we don't actually see the crowd do anything, Jesus describes their attitude
    - i. If John had doubts about the message, the crowd sneers at the message - they laugh at a message they don't understand and don't want
  - c. They didn't understand John's self-denial and call to repentance
    - i. They didn't think they needed to repent, they didn't think they needed to deny themselves
    - ii. And so they didn't want a fiery prophet calling them to repentance
    - iii. John played a dirge, a sad song of sinfulness and repentance, but the crowd didn't want to mourn
  - d. And they didn't understand Jesus' mercy and offer of healing
    - i. They didn't think that sinners deserve mercy and they clearly didn't consider themselves sinners
    - ii. And so they didn't want a savior exposing their sinfulness
    - iii. Jesus was a flute, a joyful song of mercy and grace for sinners, but the crowd didn't want to dance
  - e. The crowds simply don't like the message - it doesn't matter how it's packaged, whether the fiery preaching of John or the compassionate healing of Jesus, they're going to find something wrong with it because they don't want it
    - i. The crowd is scandalized by the message of the gospel - they don't want a message of repentance and forgiveness for sin, they don't want to confront their sinfulness and their need for a savior
2. And again, Jesus answers the objection
  - a. Jesus' answer to the crowd is shorter than His answer to John; He says, *"wisdom is justified by her deeds."*
  - b. The crowds think that they are clever - they can see through the foolish messages of John and Jesus and just enjoy the show - they don't have to like the message, they can just stand back and enjoy the spectacle
  - c. But Jesus says that really, they are foolish - wisdom is justified by her deeds, and true wisdom is found in Him
  - d. So the crowds cleverness is shown to be foolishness when they reject the message - when they don't take action on the gospel they show that all of their wisdom is foolishness, their deeds betray them
  - e. Wisdom is rooted in Jesus message so rejecting that message is the pinnacle of foolishness

## C. Scandalized by the demand of the Gospel

Matthew 11:20-24 - *Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."*

1. The last group scandalized by the message in Matthew 11 are the cities in which Jesus did most of His mighty works
  - a. When Jesus denounces Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum we get the sense that they simply ignored Jesus
  - b. Jesus had been in their cities doing mighty works demonstrating that He was the messenger of God, but they just ignored His message - it just didn't mean that much to them
  - c. Tyre and Sidon were important cities in the Old Testament, especially in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and they represented those who rest in security and riches instead of God, while Sodom represented the pinnacle of sinful disregard of God
  - d. But ignoring Jesus was much worse - if Jesus had gone to Tyre, to Sidon or to Sodom, they would not have overlooked the message, they wouldn't have been too preoccupied to see the demand that Jesus was making
  - e. But these cities were simply too preoccupied to respond to Jesus - it doesn't say that they hated Jesus, they didn't reject His message, they simply didn't do anything with His message, they ignored it
2. Jesus message demanded a response and they didn't have the time or desire to give it
  - a. The demand of the gospel was too much for them - they heard the message, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and they saw Jesus' signs of healing and restoration, but they didn't do anything about it

### III. Jesus Welcomes the Scandal of the Gospel

#### A. In Matthew 11-12, as everyone starts running away from Jesus, we might expect Jesus to respond somehow

1. And Jesus does, but it is not in anger or sadness, not in surprise or disbelief, Jesus actually thanks God for rejection
2. In Matthew 11:25, Jesus says - *I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children*
3. Jesus wasn't discouraged by the rejection of His message, instead He thanked God for it - He welcomed the scandal of the Gospel as God's purpose, God's plan for the gospel message
4. And we see two reasons in Matthew 11 for why Jesus welcomes and even rejoices in the scandal of the gospel

#### B. Jesus welcomes the scandal of the Gospel as God's plan to glorify Himself

Matthew 11:25-27 - *At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*

1. At the end of the chapter, Jesus thanks God for the scandal of the gospel because it exalts God's sovereignty
  - a. When the gospel is scandalous to people, when people aren't naturally drawn to the gospel it provides an opportunity for God's sovereign grace to shine forth
  - b. When the wise and understanding reject the message, when His own people ignore their king, then how could anyone ever embrace the message of the gospel?
  - c. The answer is, only when God reveals it to them - only by God's grace does anyone embrace the gospel and the scandalous nature of the gospel highlights this - the gospel doesn't naturally attract sinful people, so it is only God's good pleasure that reveals it to the least of these, even to little children
  - d. So Jesus welcomes the scandal of the gospel, Jesus welcomes the rejection of His message because it is on that background that God will glorify Himself through the message
  - e. The rejection of the message, the scandal of the gospel, is not a defeat for Jesus, it is how Jesus is going to display the glory of God in revealing it to those whom He chooses
2. But, as we look at these few verses, we see that the rejection of the message, the scandal of the gospel, does not only glorify the Father, but it also glorifies the Son - the scandal of the gospel will glorify Jesus
  - a. In verses 25-26, it is only the Father who reveals the message to little children, but in verse 27, we see that the Son, Jesus, is the One who reveals the Father
  - b. The scandal of the gospel highlights the centrality of Jesus to God's message - when everyone else is rejecting the message of the gospel, it shows that Jesus is the only one who knows God and know God's message
  - c. The scandal of the gospel glorifies Jesus as the only one who knows God, the only one who represents God
  - d. And, as Jesus starts to reveal Himself to His disciples, it will show that Jesus is the conduit of God's grace to mankind - Jesus chooses to whom to reveal Himself
3. So Jesus welcomes the scandal of the gospel because it is God's plan to glorify Himself - both the Father and the Son
  - a. The scandal of the gospel is not defeat, it is victory - the rejection of the message leads not to humiliation but to glory

### C. Jesus Welcomes the scandal of the Gospel as God's plan to purify His people

Matthew 11:7-15 - *As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

1. For the second reason Jesus embraces the scandal of the gospel, we're going back to the verses we skipped about John the Baptist
  - a. Remember, John's doubt about Jesus seemed to spring from the fact that Jesus didn't seem to be bringing the victorious judgment that John had prophesied - why was Jesus going around healing people instead of casting down the faithless pretenders?
  - b. After gently rebuking John and his disciples, Jesus turns to the crowd and tells them that John is right - he was the last and greatest prophet and the message of judgment and destruction that he gave was coming true
  - c. It wasn't that John's message was wrong - it wasn't that judgment wasn't going to fall, John's problem was he didn't understand how that judgment was going to come
2. So, when Jesus turns to the crowd, He asserts John's status as a prophet and John's fulfillment of the prophecy from Malachi 3-4 - the messenger that would come before the Messiah
  - a. Malachi 3:1-5 - *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.*
  - b. If John was the messenger, then Jesus will bring the refining fire that John had prophesied - He would be the refiner and purifier of His people, He will draw near for judgment against the faithless of Israel
3. But then Jesus ties the prophesied refining fire to the rejection of the Gospel
  - a. And I'll be honest, this hinges on a verse that is hard to translate and some have translated it differently, but I think context and parallel passages call us to see verse 12 as talking about response to the message
  - b. Verse 12 - *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John,*
  - c. The word violence and violent mean force and can have a range of meanings, helpfully, there's a parallel passage in Luke that helps us understand what Jesus is saying, Luke 16:16 - *The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.*
  - d. Comparing Luke, I think what Matthew is saying is that *"From the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven is pushing in (it is advancing, it is being brought near), but only those who are alive (those who are full of energy, full of force) take hold of it."*
  - e. So the gospel message, the pushing forward of the kingdom of heaven, is a refining fire itself, because it separates those who accept and reject the message - it marks out who is dead and who is alive
4. In sum, Jesus is saying that the rejection of the message is how the judgment of God is being realized in this world
  - a. Jesus welcomes the scandal of the gospel because through the rejection of His message He is purifying His people, calling out a select few who will be the core of a new Israel, the first fruits of His kingdom
  - b. Jesus is saying something very similar to John 3:19-21 - *And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."*
  - c. When men reject the message, God's judgment against them is evident - Jesus welcomes the scandal of the gospel because through it God is refining His people, purifying them for the last day

#### IV. We Must Embrace the Scandal of the Gospel

Matthew 11:6 - *Blessed is the one who is not offended by me.*

Matthew 11:28-30 - *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

##### A. Jesus ends the chapter by turning and to the people, calling them to lay down their burdens and come to Him

1. In the flow of the passage, it seems rather abrupt - Jesus denounces the crowds and cities where He did His works, then He thanks God for the scandal of the gospel, and abruptly He turns and calls out again, 'follow Me'
2. But I think this is very carefully put here at the middle of the rejection of Jesus, between chapter 11 and 12, because Jesus wants all who see the rejection to think about themselves and determine what their course will be
3. Will we reject Jesus and be scandalized by the message, or will we lay down ourselves and embrace His yoke?
4. The answer to the rejection of Jesus' message, the scandal of the gospel is to set aside our burdens and come and embrace Jesus
5. So, let's turn and consider ourselves in this passage

##### B. First, I think we need to admit that we are liable to be scandalized by the same things as the people in this passage

1. The gospel is scandalous because it confronts and condemns our sinful nature, the nature of the gospel is to confront and cast down sinners
  - a. The scandal of the gospel is completely natural, then, every sinner will be scandalized by the message - that is, unless God opens up our eyes and changes our hearts to embrace the message
  - b. So, if you are a sinner here, then you are liable to be scandalized by the message, not because of anything in the message, but because of who you are - the gospel message stands over against your sinfulness
2. So, like John and the disciples, the cost of the gospel might cause us to turn away
  - a. Jesus warns us over and over again that embracing the gospel is costly - it may cost us our friends or our families, it may cost us our lands or our possessions, it may cost us our lives - we may not know now what it will cost us, but Jesus promises us that it will cost us something
  - b. Our earthly, sinful nature will resist this cost - our sinful nature will call us to embrace some other message, to find some other pathway, to somehow not have to give up the things of this world
  - c. When the cost comes, will we embrace the cost as evidence of Jesus' final victory, or will it cause us to doubt?
  - d. When the gospel becomes costly, will we keep embracing Jesus, or will we turn and embrace other things?
  - e. When the gospel becomes costly, it is very easy to embrace other things, to let other messages provide our joy
3. Like the crowds, the message of the gospel might cause us to turn away
  - a. I hope that everyone here who has been baptized and welcomed into our midst has embraced the message of the gospel, the call to repentance and faith in a savior
  - b. But still, this message stands against our sinful nature - our nature does not want to be confronted by the message of the gospel, our nature wants to be puffed up with pride, to deny our need for a savior, to evade the call to repentance; our nature wants to look down on others as needing a savior more than we do
  - c. When the message of the gospel confront us, will we in humility embrace Jesus, or will we in pride exalt ourselves? When the message condemns our sinfulness, will we embrace Jesus' call to repentance or will we evade Him and rest in ourselves?
  - d. When the gospel calls us sinners, it is easy to evade its message, to puff ourselves up with pride in ourselves
4. Like the cities where Jesus preached, the demand of the gospel might cause us to turn away
  - a. As we've seen throughout Matthew, the gospel makes demands of us - demands for repentance and faith, demands for following Jesus in discipleship, demands to leave who we are and embrace Jesus
  - b. The gospel demands a response, the gospel demands that we do things - we can't merely hear and agree, to embrace the gospel is to follow Jesus, to live the life of a disciple
  - c. But again, our sinful nature will resist this demand - it will call us to be preoccupied with our daily lives, to prioritize the duties of the world over the demands of the gospel
  - d. When the demands of the gospel call us to act, will we embrace Jesus and follow Him, or will we be preoccupied with the cares of this world?
  - e. When the gospel calls us to prioritize it, to seek first the kingdom of heaven, will we embrace Jesus and give His kingdom our first and full effort, or will we continue to prioritize the things of the world?
  - f. When the gospel demands us to follow, it is easy to be distracted and preoccupied by the things of this world

**C. Second, We need to see the answer to the scandal of the gospel: We need to set aside ourselves and embrace Jesus**

1. When Jesus calls out to the crowds, He calls them to set aside one burden in favor of another - *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*"
2. Men reject the message of Jesus because they are burdened by themselves
  - a. Their sinful nature calls them to prioritize themselves over the message and this is a burden
  - b. Sin calls us to prioritize our safety and security over the victory of the gospel - we need to protect ourselves and keep ourselves from harm
  - c. Sin calls us to prioritize our pride and our sufficiency over the gospel - we don't need to repent, and we don't need a savior
  - d. Sin calls us to prioritize our own priorities, our own activities over the demands of the gospel - our lives our more important than Jesus claims, we don't need to be inconvenienced by Jesus
  - e. And these priorities, this sinful nature, is a burden - it is a slave master and a heavy load, a burden that we cannot bear because we are not sufficient in ourselves
3. Jesus gives us an answer to this burden - if we see that our sin is a burden to us, our prioritization of ourselves is a master that we can never satisfy, He calls us to come and lay aside ourselves
  - a. Jesus says, following me is a burden as well - to follow me is a yoke, but you'll find that my yoke is easy, and my burden is light and if you come trade your burden for my burden, you will find rest for your souls
  - b. To embrace the joy of the gospel, we need to set aside our old burden, we need to deny ourselves, we need to set aside our old desires, we need to see that those desires can never be satisfied in us - to come to Jesus we need to be ready to let ourselves die
4. And then, we embrace Jesus and His burden
  - a. Jesus yoke, His burden is a call to follow, a call to discipleship, a call to give up this world and embrace Him
  - b. And, in one sense, it is a burden beyond anything we could ever imagine - it is a burden that is impossible because our nature cannot comply, we do not have it in ourselves to bear up under Jesus' demands
  - c. But Jesus says, if we come and embrace Him, that the burden will be light, the yoke will be easy, because we will find that He is gentle and lowly in heart - He is a merciful and gracious savior, not a demanding taskmaster
  - d. If you lay aside yourself and follow Jesus, it will be the hardest thing you could ever do, but in doing it, you will find that it is easy, because Jesus will give you rest - He will make sure that the load is bourn and the demand is met, you just have to keep following Him
5. So, as Jesus says to John, "*blessed is the one who is not offended by Me.*"
  - a. Our sinful nature calls us to be scandalized by the gospel, but Jesus tells us, that if we set aside ourselves and embrace Him, if we are not scandalized by His message, we will be blessed