

Dancing and Mourning

Scripture Reading — Matthew 11:11-19

*To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces ...
Matthew 11:16 —*

Not since the days of Elijah had such powerful servants of God appeared on the stage of divine history. John the Baptist was a powerful voice for God in the wilderness, and Jesus became the ultimate friend of sinners, giving up his perfect life so that all who believe in him “shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). As colleagues in kingdom ministry, both John and Jesus called their hearers to repent and seek full life in God. Their ministry styles contrasted with that of other leaders who were not prepared to witness God at work.

The contrast in today’s verses demonstrates the fickleness that would eventually lead to death for both John and Jesus. In their day, dirges accompanied mourners, while the music of flutes accompanied dancing. But like fickle children, the generation of God’s people who witnessed this chapter of salvation history wanted neither John’s call to repentance nor Jesus’ message of grace. They rejected both messages, even though both witnessed to the same truth—Jesus is the Son of God!

This tragic rejection is rooted in humanity’s fickle preoccupation with its own self-interest. Unfortunately that self-centeredness hasn’t changed much throughout the centuries. Many still close their ears to both poles of the gospel—both its call to repentance and its call to grace-filled faith. What about you?

Prayer

Lord of all, take away our grief and replace it with the joy we can have in you. May our words and actions show that we have listened to your life-giving Word. In Jesus, Amen.

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