

Unresponsive



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"But whereto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children and children sitting in the markets, and calling and saying, 'We have piped unto you, and sang, We have mourned unto you, and ye, and ye have not lamented.'

Matthew 11:16-17

Unresponsive
When the Heart Grows Still

*A 7-Day Devotional for the Distracted and
Drifting Soul*

All Scripture taken from the King James Version

***“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the
dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”***
— Ephesians 5:14

*For the soul that once burned brightly... and
longs to burn again.*

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Introduction

When the Music Plays and No One Moves

There are few scenes more unsettling than a silent crowd during a celebration, or an unmoved heart during a holy moment. In Matthew 11:16–17, Jesus offers a parable not of kings or prophets, but of children in a marketplace. They play joyful music, yet no one dances. They sing a song of mourning, and still no one weeps. It's a simple story, but beneath it lies a deep tragedy: spiritual unresponsiveness.

This seven-day devotional series, *Unresponsive*, explores that haunting theme. Jesus wasn't merely criticizing His generation's manners, He was exposing their hearts. The call to repentance came through John the Baptist, and they shrugged. The call to joy came through Christ Himself, and they scoffed. Whether it was a funeral dirge or a wedding song, the people refused to move. They were not offended by the music, they were indifferent to it.

Yet this is not just a first-century problem. It's a timeless one. Our own generation is flooded with truth, surrounded by opportunity, and yet often dulled by apathy. We've heard the sermons. We know the Scriptures. But have we truly responded? Have we danced to Heaven's joy? Have we wept when God mourns?

Each devotion in this series will walk slowly through Matthew 11:15–24, drawing out Jesus' warnings, His lament, and His call to listen. With thoughtful illustrations and practical reflections, these readings are an invitation to recover a tender heart, one that still hears, still moves, still answers.

If you have ears to hear, then listen closely. The music of Heaven is still playing. Will you respond?

Unresponsive

When the Heart Grows Still

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Day 1

The Sound That Fell on Deaf Ears

God still speaks, but not all who hear truly listen.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. Matthew 11:16–17

In these verses, Jesus offers a picture both simple and stunning. He likens His generation to children calling out in the marketplace, playing songs of joy, then songs of sorrow, yet receiving no response. It wasn't a lack of sound, nor a failure of communication. The issue was indifference. Joy did not stir dancing. Sorrow did not bring tears. The message was heard but just not received.

He was speaking of spiritual deafness, the kind that hears truth with the ears but never allows it to reach the heart. John the Baptist had thundered in the wilderness, and they called him too strange. Jesus came eating and healing, and they called Him too soft. Different messengers, same result. The people simply would not be moved.

Once, in a small New England town, a man named Lewis lived just a stone's throw from the church. He came to every community dinner, helped patch the church roof, and sent Christmas cards to every member. But when it came to spiritual matters, Lewis stayed quiet. He'd heard it all, he'd say, revivals, testimonies, altar calls, and none of it had moved him. One winter evening, during a quiet visit, the pastor asked gently, "Lewis, have you ever truly listened for the Lord's voice?" The old man stared into the

fire and whispered, “Maybe. But I never really expected to hear anything.”

That’s how it happens. The marketplace of life hums with messages, sermons, songs, Scripture, stories, and it’s easy to hear without ever heeding. We learn to nod, to say amen, even while something deep inside remains untouched.

But the Lord still speaks. He pipes the music of grace and rejoicing. He mourns over sin and calls for repentance. His voice hasn’t faded; it’s our hearing that’s grown dull. The danger is not in missing a note but in resisting a call. Jesus wasn’t lamenting a lack of talent in the children’s song, He was grieving the apathy of unresponsive hearts.

Ask yourself today: *Am I listening?* Not just with my ears, but with my soul. Has the music of heaven been playing while I sat unmoved?

Ask the Lord to awaken your hearing. Invite Him to stir you, to bring back the joy, the sorrow, the holy response. Don’t let His voice pass you by. Listen. And answer.

Day 2

Dancing to the Wrong Tune

Sometimes our hearts grow too weary, too guarded, or too proud to respond to joy, even when joy is the very thing we need.

We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced...,

Matthew 11:17a

Jesus used the image of children in the marketplace, calling their friends to join in a happy game. They played the pipe, music of joy, celebration, lightness. But no one danced. The tune was cheerful, the invitation warm, but the response was silence. He was not speaking of playtime, but of a deeper tragedy, when Heaven offers joy, and the heart refuses to respond.

The people had heard good news. They had seen lepers cleansed, sinners forgiven, children healed. Mercy walked among them in sandals and called them to believe. But instead of rejoicing, they criticized. Instead of dancing, they stood still. Their joy had dried up. Perhaps they preferred a sterner tone. Perhaps they feared hope. Or perhaps, they simply didn't want to be moved.

In a seaside town in North Carolina, there lived a woman named Grace. She had grown up in a home where laughter was rare and religion was rigid. For years, she believed that holiness looked like somber faces and quiet living. When her church welcomed a new pastor who preached of God's delight in His people, of joy, music, and dancing hearts, Grace smiled politely but remained unmoved. "Too soft," she whispered. "Life isn't like that." But one Sunday, he spoke of the prodigal's return and the father's joy. When the word "*rejoice*" rang out, something stirred deep within

her. She had not realized how long it had been since she had truly felt joy in the Lord.

Jesus offers us joy not as a shallow emotion, but as a holy invitation. The dance is not mere movement, but a soul's response to grace. It is the song of the forgiven, the celebration of the found. When we refuse to rejoice, we miss the music of mercy. We grow hard in the name of caution and lose the beauty of holy gladness.

Has the music of the Gospel grown faint to you? Has joy become something you watch from a distance rather than something you experience?

Ask the Lord today to give you a heart that can dance again, not in reckless emotion, but in quiet, sincere joy. Let Him remind you of the goodness of your salvation, the miracle of mercy, the hope of Heaven. Don't let the tune pass you by. The music still plays for those who have ears to hear, and hearts to rejoice.

Day 3

Mourning Without Tears

A heart that cannot grieve over sin is a heart in danger of forgetting how to truly live.

...we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

Matthew 11:17b

Jesus continues His lament by describing a people who were unmoved not only by joy, but also by sorrow. When the tune of mourning was played, when the call to repentance sounded through the voice of John the Baptist, they did not weep. No conviction stirred them. No remorse broke through. They heard the dirge and did not lament.

This was not a lack of information. It was a lack of response. These were the same people who had heard warnings, seen changed lives, and witnessed the seriousness of sin. And yet, the notes of warning fell on hearts too proud to bend, too distracted to notice, or too cold to feel.

There was a man named Walter, a coal miner in West Virginia, known for being steady, reliable, and utterly unmoved. He attended church every Sunday out of habit, not hunger. When sermons called for repentance, he nodded politely. When others wept, he folded his arms. One evening, during a special service, the preacher gave a plain, piercing message on hidden sins. Walter sat still as stone. But that night, as he walked home under the stars, something turned inside him. For the first time in decades, he whispered, “Lord, break me. I haven’t wept in years. I don’t want to live that way anymore.” And God did. Not with thunder, but with tears.

There is a mourning that is holy. Not hopeless grief, but godly sorrow, the kind that softens us, humbles us, and draws us back to God. We fear brokenness because we confuse it with weakness. But in Scripture, broken hearts are often the strongest, for they have room for grace to enter.

Have you allowed the Lord to break your heart over your sin? Has the tune of mourning played while you stayed dry-eyed and unmoved?

Ask the Lord today to give you a heart that feels again. Not for sentiment's sake, but for the sake of truth. Ask Him to restore a tender conscience, to help you lament what grieves Him. For blessed are they that mourn, not with despair, but with repentance, for they shall be comforted. Don't be afraid of the tears. Sometimes the road back to joy begins with weeping. And in God's hands, even tears become instruments of healing.

Day 4

A Generation That Will Not Be Moved

Spiritual stillness can seem harmless until you realize it's not peace, it's paralysis.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation?

Matthew 11:16a

Jesus stood before a crowd and asked a question that pierced more than ears, it pierced through appearances, through excuses, and down to the truth: “*Whereunto shall I liken this generation?*” He wasn’t searching for an answer. He was exposing a condition. He had preached, healed, called, warned, and invited. Yet the people had not responded. They had not danced to joyful songs. They had not mourned at solemn ones. They simply would not be moved.

This wasn’t rebellion in its loudest form. It was resistance in its quietest. The sort that folds its arms in polite indifference. The kind that hears but does not heed, sees but does not seek, observes but never obeys. And that, perhaps, is the more dangerous form of spiritual deafness, when you believe you're listening, but the heart stays unchanged.

An old minister in the farmlands of Iowa once told of a neighbor named Len. Faithful in attendance, generous with his crops, even friendly to every preacher who came through town, but unmoved. “Good sermon, Reverend,” Len would say with a handshake and a smile, then go right on living as if Christ were a distant neighbor, not a present Lord. After decades of kind avoidance, Len fell ill. In a rare moment of clarity, he whispered to the minister, “All these

years, I was near the truth, but never moved by it. That's the saddest part."

The danger of spiritual stillness is that it wears a calm face. It can mimic maturity while hiding apathy. It can sit in pews, sing hymns, and even say "Amen", but never truly yield. And when truth no longer stirs us, when conviction no longer reaches us, when grace no longer amazes us, we are in need of awakening.

Have you grown still in heart? Not outwardly rebellious, but inwardly untouched?

Ask the Lord today to shake the dust from your soul. To stir your heart again, to weep, to rejoice, to obey. Don't settle for stillness that keeps you unchanged. God speaks not to be heard only, but to be followed. If your heart has grown quiet, ask Him to speak life back into it. For though the question still echoes, "*Whereunto shall I liken this generation?*", the invitation remains open: Be the one who hears... and moves.

Day 5

John and Jesus: Ignored in Different Ways

When the heart is unwilling, even truth spoken in love, or thunder, will be dismissed.

***For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, friend of publicans and sinners...,
Matthew 11:18–19a***

Jesus had just described a generation that wouldn't dance when joy was offered, nor weep when mourning was needed. Now He names two messengers, John and Himself. One came with a solemn voice in the wilderness, fasting and preaching repentance. The other came feasting, forgiving, and restoring broken lives. They could not have been more different in tone, yet both were rejected. Why? Because when hearts are set on refusal, it's not the method that offends, it's the message.

John was too rigid for their liking, Jesus too relaxed. One was accused of having a devil, the other of being a glutton. Yet both declared the same truth: *Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. Their generation picked apart the packaging and ignored the contents.

Years ago in a dusty Texas town, there lived a woman named Clara who had heard sermons all her life. As a child, she sat under a hellfire preacher who scared her into silence. As an adult, her new pastor spoke with a gentler tone, grace-filled, patient. But Clara rolled her eyes. "One shouts too much," she'd say. "The other barely raises his voice." One night, after a message on the prodigal son, her daughter asked, "Mama, if the message is from God, does

it matter how it sounds?” Clara blinked, then sighed. “Maybe I just don’t want to hear it.” And there it was.

When we resist God’s voice, we often cover our ears with criticism. We’ll say the preacher is too loud, too soft, too passionate, too plain. We’ll question his education or his tone. But the real question is this: *Do we want to be changed?*

God, in His mercy, sends His truth in varied ways. Sometimes as thunder. Sometimes as a whisper. But always with a purpose, to reach the heart. And when we fixate on the vessel instead of the message, we miss the invitation entirely.

Have you been guilty of dismissing a message because it wasn’t delivered the way you preferred?

Ask the Lord today to help you listen for His voice, no matter how it comes. Whether through rebuke or compassion, through prophet or friend, He still speaks. Don’t let style become a stumbling block. Tune your heart to the truth, and respond.

Day 6

The Cost of Not Responding

To hear truth and remain unchanged is not harmless delay, it is the slow drift toward judgment.

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not...

Matthew 11:20

Jesus had offered joy and sorrow, correction and compassion. He had played the music of Heaven in every key, yet many still would not respond. Now, He turns to the cities where He had done the most, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, and He begins to upbraid them. Not because they hadn't seen enough, but because they *repented not*. Light had come. Power had been displayed. Mercy had walked their streets. And still, they would not change.

This is where unresponsiveness becomes dangerous. The longer we hear and do nothing, the easier it becomes to keep doing nothing. Conviction fades. Urgency dims. The heart stiffens slowly, almost politely. And eventually, the miracles become familiar, the Gospel ordinary, and repentance unnecessary. Not because the truth has changed, but because *we* have.

An old railroad worker named Earl once lived in a town nestled between two mountain ridges. For years, trains roared through his backyard. At first, every whistle startled him awake. But in time, he stopped noticing the sound altogether. "You get used to it," he'd say. "I could sleep through a freight train." And he did, until the night one derailed. He never heard the warning.

There's a freight train of warning in Jesus' words here. Not spoken in rage, but in sorrow.

“If the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre or Sodom...”

He doesn't compare their sin, but their opportunity. The greater the light, the greater the responsibility. And when God's truth is met with silence, that silence speaks volumes.

We cannot encounter the Gospel and walk away unchanged without cost. Whether the change is joy, sorrow, surrender, or repentance, there must be a response. Jesus never called for passive listening. He called for hearts that turn, minds that renew, lives that obey.

Have you been sitting under light without responding to it? Have you heard His call and assumed there would always be time later?

Ask the Lord today to awaken urgency within you. Don't measure your spiritual health by how much you've seen or heard, but by how you've responded. Light is a gift, but it is also a test. Let today be the day you answer. While the voice still calls. While the invitation still stands. Because the cost of not responding is more than missed opportunity, it is a soul that slowly forgets how to hear.

Day 7

He That Hath Ears to Hear

The greatest danger is not in being unable to hear, but in hearing God's voice and choosing not to listen.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 11:15

This phrase, repeated often by Jesus, isn't a quaint saying. It's a summons. A holy appeal not to the ears alone, but to the heart behind them. Everyone has ears, but not everyone listens. And even fewer truly *hear*. To hear, in Jesus' words, meant to perceive, to receive, and to respond. Without that response, hearing becomes a weight, a responsibility unmet.

Jesus had spoken clearly in this chapter. Joyful music had been played. Sorrowful songs had followed. Prophets had cried out. The Savior Himself had taught, healed, and called. And still, so many were unmoved. It was not that they hadn't heard, it was that they wouldn't hear. And so, Jesus leaves them with this final challenge:

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Not long ago, in a quiet mountain town, there lived an old widow named Esther. Her hearing had nearly failed, but her faith was sharp. During Sunday worship, while others strained to follow every word, Esther would simply bow her head and pray, “Lord, let me hear what matters most.” One afternoon, her young pastor asked her what she meant. She smiled and said, “I may miss a few notes, but I haven't missed His voice yet.” Hers was not a hearing of the ears, but of the soul.

That's the kind of hearing Jesus invites us to. Not the mere intake of information, but the kind of hearing that leads to transformation. That pauses. That ponders. That yields. It's possible to read devotions daily, listen to sermons weekly, and still walk away unchanged. But Jesus is not content with well-informed listeners. He seeks surrendered followers.

The final question of this devotional is not "Have you heard?" but "Have you *heeded*?" Has the music of truth stirred your steps? Has the mourning over sin softened your heart? Have the messengers, however flawed, pointed you to Christ? And now, will you answer?

Ask the Lord today to give you spiritual ears, to hear His voice above the noise, above your preferences, above your pride. Let the words of Christ sink deep. Let them disturb, comfort, convict, and restore. For to hear Him is a mercy. To respond is life.

And as long as you have breath, the invitation remains: *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*. May we never stop listening, and never stop obeying.

Epilogue

When the Marketplace Grows Quiet

The music has faded now. The children have gone home. The dust of the marketplace settles into evening stillness. And yet the echo of Jesus' words lingers:

“We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.”

These were not the complaints of a disappointed teacher, but the sorrow of a Savior whose invitations went unanswered.

Throughout this devotional, we've walked through the solemn landscape of unresponsiveness. We've watched as joy was offered and ignored, as warning bells rang and hearts remained still. We've seen how both the fierce call of John and the tender welcome of Jesus were met with folded arms. And we've been challenged, deeply, to look at our own hearts.

Because this is not just a word for *that* generation. It is a word for *this* one. For *us*.

The danger of spiritual dullness is that it never arrives loudly. It seeps in slowly, through distractions, through busyness, through routine religiosity. Before long, we've heard so many sermons, sung so many hymns, read so many verses, that nothing stirs us like it used to. But the voice of Jesus still calls: *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”*

The question isn't whether God is speaking. He is. In every sunrise. In every page of Scripture. In every nudge of conviction. In every whispered comfort of the Holy Ghost. The question is, are we still listening?

Maybe as you've read, you've seen pieces of yourself in these pages. Perhaps you've realized that joy feels distant, that tears don't come easily anymore, that truth has landed on you like raindrops on a sealed window, noticed, but unable to soak in.

Don't let that be your final story.

The God who spoke in the marketplace still speaks in the quiet. The same Jesus who grieved over unresponsive hearts is the One who restores the ears of the deaf and breathes new life into dry bones. His mercy is still greater than your resistance. His call is still reaching for you.

So respond.

Stand when He calls. Dance when He pipes. Weep when He mourns. Repent when He convicts. Rejoice when He forgives.

Because those who respond to Him, truly, humbly, wholly, will never regret it.

“Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts...” Hebrews 3:15,

Unresponsive is a seven day devotional based on the message preached by Rev. Darryl Meadows Monday evening June 23nd, 2025 during the camp meeting at Savannah Holy Church of God in Savannah Ga.

“The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.”

Psalms 111:2

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