

Luke 7:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

Analysis

Jesus likens His generation to children in marketplace: 'They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another' (Greek 'homoi oi eismen paidiois tois en agora kathēmenois'). The children's game involves mimicking adult activities—weddings (joyful) and funerals (mournful). The complaint 'we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept' illustrates unreasonable pickiness. No matter what tune is played, they refuse to respond appropriately. Jesus applies this to His generation's response to John's asceticism and His own sociability—both rejected. Reformed theology recognizes that unregenerate humanity resists God's messengers regardless of method. The problem isn't presentation but hearers' hardness.

Historical Context

Ancient marketplaces were public squares where business, social interaction, and children's play occurred. The game described—children trying to get peers to respond to different moods—was apparently common. Jesus used relatable illustration to expose absurdity of His contemporaries' inconsistent criticisms. This rhetorical technique appears throughout His teaching—parables from everyday life revealing spiritual truth.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do contradictory criticisms of Christian ministry reveal critics' hardness rather than ministers' failure?
2. In what ways do we resist God's message when it doesn't match our preferences?
3. How should ministers respond to unreasonable or contradictory criticisms?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Κύριος, τίνι οὖν ὄμοιώσω τοὺς
said And G3588 the Lord G2962 Whereunto G5101 then G3767 shall I liken G3666 G3588
G2036 G1161 G3588 G2962 G5101 G3767 G3666 G3588

ἀνθρώπους τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ τίνι εἰσὶν
the men G3588 generation G1074 and G2532 Whereunto G5101 are they G1526
G444 G3588 G1074 G2532 G5101 G1526

ὄμοιοι

like
G3664

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 2:13 (Parallel theme): What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee?