

Matthew 11:20-24 Opportunity for Repentance

Introduction: In our text Jesus re-visits some of the cities of Galilee. (Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum) These are cities where most of mighty miracles had been done.

I. A sharp upbraiding, Verse 20

- A. The words of Jesus to these cities were very sharp and cutting.
(Why? He is usually very kind.)
- B. These people had heard John the Baptist preach.
(John had preached repentance, but they had not repented at the preaching of John.)
- C. They had heard Jesus preach.
 - 1. Jesus too preached that they should repent.
 - 2. But they still had not repented.
- D. Most of the miracles were done in those cities, but they still had not repented.
- E. The message of repentance implied guilt on their part, but they repented not of their sin.
- F. The message of repentance implied pardon for all who would repent, but they repented not.

II. A pronouncement of woe to Chorazin and Bethsaida, Verses 21-22.

- A. Chorazin was about 2 ½ miles north of Capernaum.
- B. Bethsaida was a suburb of Capernaum.
 - 1. John said that Peter and Andrew were from Bethsaida.
 - 2. Mark said they were from Capernaum.
 - 3. It was actually the fishing village of Capernaum.
- C. “Woe” sounds a warning in no uncertain terms.
 - 1. These cities were in danger of being destroyed.
 - 2. The people were in danger of everlasting fire.
- D. Jesus said that if Tyre and Sidon had been given the same opportunity as Chorazin and Bethsaida they would have repented.
 - 1. This must have been a blow to those proud Jews because Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities.
 - 2. Jesus did not say this to hurt them, but to shake them up so they would repent.
- E. Jesus said that it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in judgment.
(The greater one's opportunity to repent, the greater his responsibility and the greater his punishment.)

III. A pronouncement of woe also to Capernaum, Verses 23-24.

- A. The city of Capernaum also received a pronouncement of judgment from the Lord.
(It has been brought down.)
- B. The whole city of Capernaum had had great opportunity to repent and be saved.
 - 1. Jesus had set up His headquarters there for His whole Galilean ministry.
(He and His apostles lived there at that time.)
 - 2. Jesus had preached there again and again and again.
 - 3. Numerous miracles had identified Him as the Messiah.
(Leper, blind, palsied, woman with issue of blood twelve years, dead girl restored.)
- C. Jesus said that if Sodom had had the same kind of opportunity to repent even wicked Sodom would have repented. (One of the most wicked cities of all time.)

D. Therefore Sodom would have more leniency in judgment.

1. Jesus was not implying that the wicked sinners of Sodom would get off light in judgment.
2. He was saying that people of Capernaum would have the greater punishment because of their greater opportunity to repent.

Conclusion:

Lost sinners today have a great opportunity to repent and get saved. We have the Bible completed, which they did not have. We have churches in every community preaching the word, which they did not have. We have preaching on the radio and on television, which they did not have. We have the gospel on the printed page and a Bible in every home, which they did not have. One who has such great opportunity to repent of his sins and get saved will find it more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for himself.

If Jesus were here He would probably rebuke some of you for waiting so long.

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