

Matthew 11:20-24. Christ Upbraids Three Cities for Their Impenitence.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Jesus' preaching had little effect on men's hearts, but those who seek repentance will receive it from Him.

Scripture: Matthew 11:20-21, Matthew 13:15, Luke 13:3, Acts 5:31

Topics: "Repentance And Judgment", "Divine Omniscience"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the importance of hearts being prepared to receive the preaching of the Lord Jesus for true conversion to take place. Despite the miracles and teachings of Jesus, some cities like Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum faced judgment instead of blessing due to their lack of repentance. Jesus reveals that even heathen cities like Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would have repented if they had witnessed His miracles, showing His omniscience and justice in dealing with all. The story of a Hindoo man's immediate repentance upon hearing about Jesus' love serves as a convicting example for those who have heard the Gospel but have not repented yet, emphasizing the urgency of seeking repentance before it's too late.

Transcript

We find from this passage that the preaching of the Lord Jesus produced very little effect upon men's hearts. In order that people be converted, it is necessary, not only that the preaching be faithful, but that the hearts of the hearers be prepared--for otherwise the tongues of holy men, or of angels, or even of the Son of God, may speak in vain.

The cities in which our Savior most frequently preached were Chorazin, Bethsaida, and especially Capernaum. We are inclined to exclaim, "Blessed cities!" But Jesus says, "Woe unto you, Chorazin!" The preaching of the Son of God was not a blessing to that city, but a curse. And now the very place where it stood cannot be ascertained. Travelers may still visit Bethlehem and Nazareth, Jericho and Sychar, and many other ancient cities; but if they inquire for Capernaum, and Chorazin, and Bethsaida, they will get no certain answer.

There is a very wonderful truth contained in the words of Christ, just read by us. Jesus declared that Tyre and Sidon, two heathen cities, would have repented, if they had seen the miracles he had performed in Israel; and that Sodom, that most wicked city, would also have repented, and been spared the "vengeance of eternal fire." We see therefore that Jesus not only knows all that does happen, and all that will happen;

but that he also knows all that would have happened, in every possible case. He knows how each heathen city would have received his word, had she heard it. He does not explain to us his reasons for not giving that light to Tyre and Sidon which he bestowed on the cities of Israel. He gives an account of none of his matters. The Judge of all the earth will do right, and none may dare to say, or even to think, "What are you doing?" At the last day his justice in his dealings with men will be seen and acknowledged by the assembled universe. The degree of every person's punishment will be exactly proportioned to his guilt; and that guilt will be measured by his advantages, and by the use he made of them. And can we hear this without reflecting upon our own case? How great are the privileges we enjoy!

There have been heathens, who, as soon as they were told of the love of Jesus in dying for their sins, began to repent. A Hindoo set out on a pilgrimage to Juggernaut, carrying with him a few tracts which he had not read. Being detained on the way by the illness of his wife, he had the opportunity of reading them attentively. Did he proceed to Juggernaut? No! he set out on a better pilgrimage. Desiring to persuade his countrymen to turn to the Lord, he often read aloud to little assemblies in the open air. While thus engaged, a poor native passed by, stopped to listen, was struck by what he heard, asked a few important questions, and immediately determined to give himself to Him who had bought him with his blood. (Report of the Religious Tract Society for 1845, p. 58.)

Are not those Hindoos a reproach to any who, having heard many sermons, and read many chapters, and received much instruction, have not repented yet? Surely if we repent not, we shall be thrust down to the lowest hell; far, far below the wickedest of the heathen!

But Jesus will himself bestow repentance on all who seek this precious grace. "Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins," (Acts. 5:31.)

Source:

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