

Too Distracted to Care

Harmony M.B.C., August 3, 2008 (Morning)

Robert P. Myers

Mat. 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Mat. 11:22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Mat. 11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Mat. 11:24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Mat. 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Hardness of heart, and rejection of the obvious regarding spiritual things has been the legacy of human kind. We are by nature skeptics, proud, and inclined to the base worldliness and lack of spiritual fruit that we see condemned here by Christ when He addresses Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

Wealth, privilege, and honor have a way of corrupting cultures, communities, and people. Here Christ is upbraiding cities that had all these things. This stands, I think, as a perpetual warning to cultures, communities, and people. Human history is strewn with instances of this. It is also littered with the debris of thousands of cultures which did not listen to this divine message that God has preached since the beginning of time.

His pronouncement against these communities has to do with the fact that they totally ignored the presence of the Messiah and the works that He had done there. This is the really hurtful legacy that belongs to so many affluent societies.

Without much of a stretch, we can see the same attitude in our society today. There's a lot of lip services paid to Christ all around us, but very little real service given. We as informed people of God need to keep in mind what kind of society we live in. We need to arm ourselves with the fact that our fellow citizens are like the citizens of these communities that Christ targeted. We also need to keep before us the fact of the fate of these communities. It should be a goal of ours to point to our Lord and remind our fellow Americans that He is still the great miracle worker; that He is still the great Savior...and that they need such a Savior.

If you are here today and do not know Christ in a personal experience that has made you a citizen of the Kingdom of God, you may be caught up in the offense of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. If you are, you are in a very serious condition. I urge you to listen today to this message and respond to the Lord as you listen.

I. Ignoring the Witness of Christ is a Fatal Failure And The Severity of Judgment Against

Those Who Ignore or Despise the Witness of Christ in Their Midst Will Be the Worst Kind- vv. 22-24

- We want to remember again that it is distraction by the pursuit of the things of the world that cause cultures to ignore Christ.
 - First: pronouncement involving Tyre and Sidon: vv.21-22

Tyre and Sidon were very worldly, rich cities, and distracted beyond what we can imagine by all the affluence and worldly pursuits available. They might be compared to San Francisco, Vienna, or Paris in decadence and luxury.

Chorazin and Bethsaida are little more than a historical note today:

- Bethsaida is purported to be the birth place of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. Jesus performed a number of miracles there (Mark 8:22-26; Luke 9:10).
 - Settled in the 10th century B.C. (i.e., this city survived for 1,000 years before it ignored Christ). During this time, archaeologists believe that it was the capital city of the Kingdom of Geshur and the seat of its monarchs.
 - It was a thriving city with a brisk and profitable fishing industry at the time of Christ's ministry.
- Second: pronouncement concerning Sodom: v.v.23-34
 - About Sodom: Bible is clear about Sodom: you can read about it in Genesis 13.
 - Capernaum today is just an archaeological find; in other words, an ancient ruin. It was once thriving center of riches and trade.

Capernaum was where Christ called Andrew, Peter, James and John, perhaps residents of this place at that time. The Bible tells us that a Roman centurion built a synagogue here for the Jews. His servant was also healed from severe palsy by Jesus (Luke 7:1-10). The remains of what must have been a beautiful basalt synagogue has been discovered by archaeologists. As expected for such a sacred building, it was found at the highest point in town.

This is the synagogue where our Lord frequently taught (John 6:59; Mark 1:21; Luke 4:33). Here, Jesus cured a demon possessed man (Mark 1:21-28) and delivered the sermon on the bread of life (John 6:25-59). He even restored the life of the daughter of one rulers of this synagogue (Mark 5:22; Luke 8:41)

This is the synagogue where our Lord frequently taught (John 6:59; Mark 1:21; Luke 4:33). Here, Jesus cured a demon-possessed man (Mark 1:21-28) and delivered the sermon on the bread of life (John 6:25-59). He even restored the life of the daughter of one rulers of this synagogue (Mark 5:22; Luke 8:41).

II. It Is Arrogant Human Wisdom and Prudence In Human Hearts That Causes This Disdain - v.25

- Prudence: Sagacious: Having or showing keen discernment, sound judgment, and farsightedness.
 - (Does not mean that wise or prudent persons cannot be given an understanding of the secrets of Christ; it means that they will not come to it through human wisdom or prudence)
 - It does mean that when humans rely on wisdom and prudence to discover Christ, they will fail to find out anything about him beyond superficial and intellectual knowledge or understanding.
 - It also means that when human wisdom and prudence are chosen as the tools to discover Christ, no discovery will occur

III. God Reveals The Power of Christ to the Simple - v.25

- The lesson to human beings:
 - God is not impressed with our human wisdom and prudence
 - Only by coming before God in simplicity and humility can we learn that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God
 - Great example of this in:

Luke 18:10-14 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
- Great word picture about this very principle of God in:
 - 1Cor. 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the **world by wisdom knew not God**, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.