

THE GOSPEL CALL AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 11:20-30

LESSON 82 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 11:20-30 (KJV)

²⁰ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

²⁶ Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

²⁷ All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Certain Cities Upbraided

1 Chorazin and Bethsaida are upbraided because they failed to repent, Matthew 11:20;

Proverbs 1:24-31 (KJV)

²⁴ Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

²⁵ But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

²⁷ When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

²⁸ Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

²⁹ For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

³⁰ They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

³¹ Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

Jeremiah 44:5-6 (KJV)

⁵ But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.

⁶ Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted *and* desolate, as at this day.

2 If Jesus' mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, the people there would have repented, Matthew 11:21;

Luke 10:13 (KJV)

¹³ Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Luke 11:31 (KJV)

³¹ The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

Revelation 2:21 (KJV)

²¹ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Luke 13:2-5 (KJV)

² And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

³ I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

⁴ Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

⁵ I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

3 Tyre and Sidon shall escape with less judgment, but Capernaum that was exalted to Heaven shall be brought down to hell, Matthew 11: 22-24;

Matthew 23:12 (KJV)

¹² And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Isaiah 14:13-15 (KJV)

¹³ For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

¹⁵ Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

Lamentations 2:1-2 (KJV)

¹ How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, *and* cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!

² The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought *them* down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof.

II The Gospel Hid

1 The Gospel is hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto "babes," Matthew 11:25. 26;

Psalm 8:2 (KJV)

² Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

1 Corinthians 1:19 (KJV)

¹⁹ For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

2 Corinthians 4:3 (KJV)

³ But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

2 All things are delivered into the hands of the Son. Matthew 11:27;

John 3:35 (KJV)

³⁵ The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

John 13:3 (KJV)

³ Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

Hebrews 2:8 (KJV)

⁸ Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

1 Corinthians 15:27-28 (KJV)

²⁷ For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

²⁸ And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

III The Gospel Call

I Rest is promised to the weary and heavy laden if they will come, Matthew 11:28;

Isaiah 53:4 (KJV)

⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isaiah 28:12 (KJV)

¹² To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing; yet they would not hear.

Exodus 33:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.

2 His yoke is easy and His burden is light, Matthew 11:29, 30;

1 John 5:3 (KJV)

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

NOTES:

Judgments Pronounced

Jesus spent most of His ministry around the Sea of Galilee. He performed many miracles in the midst of these Galileans; nevertheless, the hearts of the multitudes there were filled with hardness and unbelief. He compared that generation to children sitting in the market places 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 11:17). John the Baptist came to them fasting and mourning, preaching repentance; many failed to lament over their sins. The Son of Man came with the joyful news of salvation; He healed the sick and cleansed the lepers; but many failed to rejoice.

Then He upbraided those cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, and said if those works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, the people there would have repented long before in sackcloth and ashes. "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. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" This seems to indicate that the hearts of the people had grown harder as the centuries rolled by. Small wonder the Lord asked the question, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

If the Lord upbraided those cities, when the light of the glorious Gospel was just beginning to break forth on the world, what shall be the judgment of people living in these days under the blazing light of this Latter Rain. Gospel?

Responsibility

Jesus told the Pharisees one day, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matthew 12:41). The account of Jonah shows us clearly the responsibility that rests on the people of God to tell the story, and also the responsibility that rests upon those who hear Jonah tried to shift the responsibility by running away from the Lord. Then he was in serious trouble and cried unto the Lord for help. The Lord sent him help, but He still held Jonah responsible for carrying the message to Nineveh.

Today the people of God are watchmen on the walls It is their responsibility to tell the world of the impending judgment. If we, as Christians, warn the people and the warning is heeded, we have not only cleared our own souls but also have saved others from death; but if we fail to warn them, the Lord says He will require their blood at our hands (Ezekiel 33:1-9 **Ezekiel 33:1-9 (KJV)** ¹ Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ² Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: ³ If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; ⁴ Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. ⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. ⁶ But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. ⁷ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. ⁸ When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. ⁹ Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul). As watchmen, we have a high calling and a tremendous responsibility.

Many times at the close of a meeting our ministers have said, "We have told you the story in song, in testimony, and in the preaching of the Word; the responsibility was upon us. Now it shifts to you: will you accept it or reject it?" Many people have trembled under conviction as the judgments of God have been proclaimed from the lips of an anointed minister; but, like Felix of old, they have put it off for a more convenient season, and, perhaps like him, too, they never found that more convenient time.

We cannot afford to trifle with such an important issue as

eternal life: no one has the promise of tomorrow. "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7).

Unbelief

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:17, 18). The people of Capernaum saw mighty works done yet they failed to repent and believe. Seed sown on rocky ground with no depth of earth soon withers. If the heart is opened, the seed — the Word of God — will take root and grow and bring forth fruit unto eternal life, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold. The Word is alive and powerful, but as a free moral agent every person has the power to accept or reject it. Many of our cities today are in the whirlpool of sin and unbelief, as were Chorazin and Bethsaida. They have heard the truth but have turned from it to formalism, false cults, higher criticism, and evolution. Many have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. The Word tells us. "From such turn away" (II Timothy 3:5).

Revealed unto Babes

Jesus thanked the Father that He had hid these things from the wise and prudent and had revealed them unto babes. Paul says, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (I Corinthians 1:26). And in John 1:12 we read, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

It was not because He did not want them to see, that God hid these things from the wise and prudent. God is already revealed by His creation and works, and through His Word. But the wise and prudent have rejected God and set up their own theories, some of which eliminate God as the Creator. Their own hearts became darkened because they refused to accept God's righteousness, which is of faith; and they tried to establish their own righteousness. In professing themselves to be wise they became fools (**Romans 1:16-22 (KJV)**). ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: ²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools). "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ... that no flesh should glory in his presence" (I Corinthians 1:27, 29).

Yokes

The common acceptance of the term "yoke" is a wooden instrument placed around the necks of draft animals to couple them together for drawing. If one animal pulls forward and one holds back, the yoke binds. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me" (Matthew 11:29). Not only does He want us to take His yoke and be coupled together with Him but He wants us to learn how to work together with Him and for

As we learn to keep in the center of His will, the yoke is

easy and the burden is light. But if we draw back, when He tries to lead us on, we encounter difficulty. The Word says it is good to bear the yoke in our youth (Lamentations 3:27).

When Solomon died and the people came to Rehoboam to make him king, they said to him, "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore 'ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us" (II Chronicles 10:4). But the new king did not hearken to them. The devil never makes the burden lighter. Jesus always takes the heavy end of the load and makes the burden light.

The Gospel Invitation

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." Is it not strange that so many people become sick in body, or sick in soul, or in distress of some kind before they will accept the Gospel call? Jesus knew that such would be the case, so He invites the "heavy laden" to come.

They who are in trouble today can seek the face of Jesus, and He will give them rest. The Lord stretches forth His hands and says, "Come ... I will give you rest." Oh, what a rest! What a weight is lifted when a soul comes. He does not limit the call to a few weary, sick ones but throws His arms wide open to a whole lost world and says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). How could God be more free and more all-inclusive with His great invitation? How could a lost world be more stupid, more loath to accept it than the world is today? "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7).

QUESTIONS

- 1 To whom does God extend the Gospel invitation?
- 2 What is the greatest sin?
- 3 What was Capernaum's fate?
- 4 Into whose hands has God delivered all things?
- 5 Unto whom is the Gospel revealed?
- 6 What does Christ mean by saying His yoke is easy?
- 7 What responsibility do the saints have in the Gospel?
- 8 After the Gospel has been preached in a city, upon whom does the responsibility fall?
- 9 If the miracles Jesus did had been done in Tyre and Sidon what would they have done?