

The Weight Of Gospel Responsibility

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All right. Good evening everyone. Welcome to Wednesday night Bible study. Before we start, let's go ahead and lead in prayer. Father, I thank you for this opportunity to come before you. I ask that you would help me to deliver this weighty message. God, I pray that I would preach it boldly clearly and that it would honor you that lift up Christ in this message. I pray father give the listeners hearts to be receptive to these truths. And I pray father that the end of this message Lord that you would help each one of us to respond according to your will and purpose. And I pray that again you would be glorified and that you would bless us to this end in Jesus name. Amen.

You will go ahead and turn with me to Luke chapter 10 and we will continue our study and we will be in verse 13 this evening beginning in verse 13 of chapter 10 of Luke's gospel.

I want to cover some things that may help us to center us in the text that we're about to read. Just a brief overview of where we have started. In Luke chapter 10, we encountered the Lord Jesus Christ commissioning the 72 disciples and they send them and they were sent out as lambs among wolves and the hostility that they were going into in their going to town to town. We see that in Luke 10:1 and then verse three. And then their mission was to serve and speak on behalf of the prince of peace. And we know that title is in Isaiah 9:6, a very popular verse. And then we see in the text in chapter 10 the primary mandate was to offer a blessing to the homes that the disciples went and visited to all homes this blessing and it was to all households announcing. We see the kingdom of God has come near and we saw that twice repeated in verse five and verse 9. And again the I mentioned in that message the relevancy of the importance of why it was stated twice because this is important. This is eternal consequences that the listening ear was to receive. And then we see that this peace is not merely a greeting but is a very reality of the kingdom, the kingdom of God. the reality that reconciliation with God is made possible. Romans 5:1, justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And then we see the disciples sought amongst the households that they visited to look for the son of peace, a son of peace, someone whose heart was prepared to receive the message from the disciples. And then the Lord Jesus knew that the offer of peace would often be met with rejection. So he didn't want the disciples again to go into the world into these towns and going everyone's going to receive the good news, the message of the kingdom. And he's and he notes that in verse six if you see that in the text.

Now today we're going to turn to verses 13-16 where we're going to see severe consequences for those who enjoy the greatest spiritual privileges but yet remain unmoved by the message of the kingdom. So the Lord Jesus Christ is going to name certain towns by name. And we're going to go into it and I'm just going to share with you. So, if you saw in verse 12, in verse 12, it says that

towards the end of that verse, it says, I'll just read say the whole verse and I'll make mention of it. It says, "But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city." So, so here he's going to now mention these cities.

So verse 13, verse 13 reads this. 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.

So the Lord Jesus begins with a piercing lament in this verse. The word woe. The word woe that had a very profound meaning. We can go back to Isaiah 5 and verse 20 where the prophet announced impending judgment. And I'll just read it to you. It said this. Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. So this passage describes a severe condemnation reserved for those who corrupt spiritual and ethical standards of what the true meaning of ethics is. And this corruption is characterized by what? Reversal, right? in morality, good for evil, and what else? Confusing darkness with light, bitter with sweet. And it signified a profound ethical breakdown in someone's conscience and ultimately their understanding of morality. And the worst thing is that all this leads to is a rejection of absolute truth. Absolute truth. And this is again even accentuating even more is that when someone rationalizes sin, meaning sin is okay in their life. And this is typical when that happens, it's a waterfall, a cascading effect on someone's life that doesn't believe in absolute truth and rejects it. Don't we see that today? When someone's life they just accept sin and with pride and you see them just breaking down morality broken down in understanding of what true standard according to God is with good and with evil. and just rationalized sin is typically seen in someone that just enjoys the temporal world, worldly pleasures and prioritizes those things above God's ways, eternal life.

And then we see also in Jeremiah 22:13, this is what Jeremiah says. Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong, that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. This text describes God condemning those in power exploiting others to build their wealth. So taking advantage of the poor as it were and building up themselves these lavish homes, taking advantage of the situation and that disparity amongst the rich and the poor in the worst case scenario. And then it goes further in this text that they would refuse to pay fair wages. They would refuse to pay fair wages and they would act unjustly by doing so. And they would face ultimately Jeremiah says to those that do that will face divine judgment for their greed and oppression. So know that judgment will come. Judgment will come. It is for sure. And that's what was prophesied in the life of Jeremiah.

Now, continuing to this passage now, all that as background, how does this impact what the Lord Jesus says about these specific cities? Well, these were towns that he was going to visit, right? And he would describe these towns like this bursting. These were town, this was a town that saw the miracle, the feeding of the 5,000. Okay, we see that in Luke chapter 9 through 10 and 17 that happened prior to this judgment. So, so they saw miracles. That was one of them. Number one, they saw the healing of the blind. So, they saw miracle after miracle. And yet the Lord Jesus contrasts them with Tyre and Sidon which were notorious by the way for pagan practices. Let me just name a few of them. Isaiah and Ezekiel mentioned Tyre and Sidon in this way that they were proud excessive pride and not only that but materialism. So materialism was not it's not an

American thing. It's a worldwide thing. And so Tyre and Sidon they were known for this excessive pride, excessive materialism. And then how it was unfolded was military pride and economic materialism and it was to the excess. And so he's referencing this scenario of the past with this specific town. He's referencing here in verse 13. And he says that these cities would have already responded with sackcloth and ashes. Okay. So terminology after terminology I want to give reference points. So what is sackcloth and ashes then? While this is to be a visible deep contrition or repentance, we see this in Jonah chapter 3:5 and 6. This word repentance, this word sackcloth and ashes, it in fact says this this was Jonah speaking to the city of Nineveh. And what happened there was they proclaimed a fast number one and then they also the rich and the poor they all came together and they repented. That was really what happened in Nineveh. It is described in verses five and six of Jonah. And then not only the rich and poor, but it even touched the king. Verse six, I'll just read it. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. So, this was what you call revival. That's the term when everyone is just repenting and falling down before God. And so now you can understand this is a big deal what the Lord Jesus is talking about comparing to these scenarios.

You're not doing that. And you have a greater witness and that's the Lord Jesus Christ, right? They didn't have that great revelation. They do. And so that's a great tragedy. And that here here's the here's the here's where I'm trying to get at. The great tragedy is familiarity without response causes callous hearts. Okay? Familiarity without response creates callous hearts. And those that are closest to the truth, that can happen very quickly. And so that that's the weightiness of this part of the text in verse 13.

Now, we're going to continue and read verse 14. Let's look at 14. says this, "But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you." Okay, so Tyre and Sidon said once in verse 13, and now it's said again in verse 14, but more impact here. Let's look at verse 14 more carefully. Theologians would call this situation here as greater responsibility. That's what theologians call greater responsibility. And this principle was taught by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Let me just read from you if you want to turn to it. Luke 12:47-48. The principle of greater responsibility. This is what the Lord Jesus said. And that servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. Here it is. For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required. Okay. So if you look at the text and if you go to verse 47 it says the servant which knew his lord's will and then neither did. You see that? And then in verse 48 it says the one that knew not and did. You see that? So I'm using those as an analogy is that judgment and punishment are rendered according to the knowledge as well as the action. You see that with they knew and they didn't do right and so both are demanded of the Lord. So the greater the knowledge, the greater the accountability, right? And we have that the great revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to us on this side of the New Testament.

Now, Tyre and Sidon sinned against the general revelation. But the Galilean towns that the Lord Jesus was going about, they sinned against the direct messianic revelation of the son of God, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. And we see passages like Romans 2:12 and 16. I'm not going to read the whole thing, but it says there this primarily that those that are gentile people sin without

law shall also perish without the law. And the Jewish people, those sin in the law because they were given the law, shall be judged by the law. And then verse 16 says, "The day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." This passage asserts that all humanity stands condemned by its own failure to live up to the moral standard God has revealed both the Gentiles with the conscience and with the Jewish people with the law. And we see that in Romans 1 through 3. I won't go there, but it's in there. You can go ahead read that for yourself at home. But the idea is whether through scripture, the law, the Jewish people, or conscience for the Gentiles, no one is exempt from God's judgment. And true righteousness comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and not by the law.

Now, I want to take that word more tolerable in the text. If you look down there, it's it indicates judgment is certain for all who reject God. All and the degree of severity is tied to the opportunity squandered away. Meaning you receive it and you just don't even receive it. And this is a warning that spiritual privilege is a stewardship. God holds everyone accountable to whenever we hear the word of God. And neglecting it is not a neutral act. You can't say, "Well, I heard it, but I didn't really hear it." No. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Every time the word of God is preached, faith comes to you. It can be received. And the one that neglects it, it's not a neutral act, but one stores up wrath. Hebrews 2:3 says this, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" He's talking about disciples after the Lord Jesus Christ.

So this is a weighty sermon. No doubt about it. But we're going to go even further and greater consequence. Look at with me verse 15. and thou Capernaum which art exalted to heaven shalt be thrust down to hell.

Okay. Now this verse is what you will call the ultimate downfall of spiritual pride. The ultimate downfall of spiritual pride. This indictment that the Lord Jesus reaches its peak with Capernaum. Jesus made Capernaum his chosen base by the way for his operations. He did about 70% of his ministry in this town. And so even though they had great spiritual advantage, the Lord Jesus Christ doing all these great things in this town, this close connection to the Messiah, they possibly might have thought, "Oh, we have the Lord Jesus Christ in our town." And so they probably felt the immense pride connected to that which is a great warning, isn't it? Places that have great revival for example and you know it could be really bad for those people that are in that time a place and not receiving the message. When God works more powerfully again there's greater accountability. That's what the Lord Jesus said in chapter 12, isn't it?

So Jesus contrasts this pride with arrogance and he uses this arrogance of the king of Babylon and that's the primary meaning of what he says here in verse 15 shall be thrust down to hell. I'm going to share with you the scripture verse that is referenced to this and this it's in Isaiah chapter 14 verses 13 to 15. Okay, I'll read it to you and you'll see the connection. It says this, 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. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high. Verse 15, yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. Now I read verse 15. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to

heaven, shall be thrust down to hell. So this is a real judgment that really did happen in Isaiah and it's really happened to Capernaum.

And so the Lord Jesus countered his pride with the principle, pride goes before destruction. We see that in Proverbs 16:18 as well. So instead of exaltation which Capernaum again could have been thinking most likely this pride that they were of heaven as it were was actually the reversal they were of hell and they were going to be thrust into hell and we know hell is a real place where has real torment and judgment. Luke chapter 16 verse 23 if you want to turn there says in hell he lift up his eyes being in torment.

So it is a real place with real torment. I know recently somebody came out and said hell is not a real place where real torment happens but instead he believes in annihilationism which is you're just going to not exist anymore with no pain. That's not true. This is the text that completely reverses that understanding.

So the fate of Capernaum serves as a stark validation of this word woe. Okay? Because there's actually archaeological proof of Capernaum. Just like with Sodom and Gomorrah, how it just became flattened. Same thing you can reference that this place Capernaum is no longer what it used to be. What was it? It was actually a flourishing center of trade full of materialism full of pride and it ultimately crumbled in actual desolate ruins doesn't exist as it was once were which is a powerful reminder isn't it that sincere repentance if it's not sought after that mere outward religious practice oh we have the Lord Jesus here in our town as it Oh, we are the place where Jesus did the most ministry. That kind of religious nonsense is not what the Lord Jesus Christ seeks after. So that's a warning for all of us in this part of the text.

Now let's look at verse 16. Verse 16, this is where we're going to end tonight. says, "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."

What we see here is what we call the divine chain of authority. Divine chain of authority. The Lord Jesus anchors the authority of his messengers and then the Lord Jesus established a seamless authoritative connection originating with the father flowing through the son the lord Jesus Christ and extending to the messengers those he sends out. We see that chain right and so to hear a biblically faithful message is to hear the voice of Christ himself. We see this consistent with the Apostle Paul who said to the Christians at Thessalonica. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says this, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

Consequently, rejecting the messenger is actually a personal insult against God himself. And we see this in 1 Thessalonians 4:8 says this, "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit."

So in conclusion, this warning here of Luke chapter 10, it's a sobering reminder that mirrors in fact today, doesn't it? Again, these are timeless truths. We can connect this to scenarios today. And anywhere that we see these kind of scenarios, there will be future judgment.

And on that note, I don't want to end there. I do want to share that yes there is that but I want to contrast with what is available today. What is available today? Well, today we have unprecedented access to scripture. We have unprecedented historical evidence. We have unprecedented references. So many commentaries. So many faithful preachers, faithful men, missionaries and there's testimony after testimony of New Testament churches. So that that is true of today. But the truth is is that this abundant light that is given to us demands a response, doesn't it? And I want that to be the case. Just because we're sitting in this text doesn't mean the response cannot be the opposite of what was shared tonight. My hope and desire is that you see this as a warning but also a guard to not fall into complacency like Capernaum or like the other places that the Lord Jesus Christ went to that he sent as lambs to them. You see, because if we're not moved by the truth, then true repentance cannot happen. Right? If we're not moved by the truth, then true repentance cannot happen.

And so, if you are here tonight that you are just perpetually unmoved by the truth, unmoved by the truth, no opportunity for repentance for you. I'm praying that this message changes that perpetual rhythm in your life. I'm praying that instead this would happen because repentance is a word that is a change of mind, is a change of direction. And I want you to know what that change of direction is. Psalm 51:12 puts it this way. When someone is truly repented of restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. This is one whom is a believer. Okay, so it speaks to Christians. And then how does it speak to those who are non-Christians? Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. Refreshing times of the Lord." So you see, repentance is a good thing for both the Christian and the non-Christian. There is true joy. There's refreshing in the presence of the Lord.

So God commands all people everywhere to repent. And we see this in Acts 17:30-31. In the times of this ignorance, God winked at but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. All men everywhere to repent because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead. You have the gospel message right there is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was raised from the dead. Death, burial, and resurrection.

So let us not harden our hearts whenever the gospel is presented. He is the one that we are to believe in. We're to trust in. And that helps us to not have a hardened heart at the end of the day, but rather treasure every ray of biblical light that's given to you through the scriptures when it's read. And then Hebrews 3:15 says this, while it is said today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. Provocation simply means, are you stirred by this? Are you truly stirred by the word of God? And does it move you to action? That's what provocation means. It means it's not just a stirring full of emotions, but it's a work of the spirit of God. And the spirit of God points you to the Lord Jesus Christ. And he's the one that moves you to him.

And every time we have that opportunity, every time when the truth of God doesn't give us this refreshment, every time we don't have this joy of our salvation, it's a time for God to move in your life. It is a time to move in your life. And so when you hear his voice through the preacher it's for you to turn to him for continual mercy for those who are Christians and for those that are not to receive that first moment of receiving his mercy and his grace.

Second Peter 3:9 says this, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Here it's talking about God actually is delaying the return of Christ for us. Not because of him, but because of us. He wants to share his longsuffering with us and he's giving more people time to repent. And so this passage is speaking to those that are unbelievers. And if you are one here tonight, may the Lord speak to you through the text through me and God will use it Lord willing to change your heart from your sin, yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ for his glory, for his honor, and to his praise in Jesus name. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for just the clear warnings and the clear promises whether for negative in the judgment or for positive in experiencing true joy of our salvation in the Lord or true refreshing in the presence of the Lord. I thank you, Father, that you use these examples for our admonition, for our correction, and even rebuke if we need to. Lord, I trust in your spirit to do this work. Father, I can't demand anything from anyone. It must be wrought by the Holy Spirit who is the one that brings conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And is the Holy Spirit that also gives the fruit of the spirit. And we thank you that we have all these things, Lord, in you. And I pray, Father, that wherever anyone may be here tonight of receiving your truth, I pray, Father, for the good return, Lord, which is just continual spiritual nourishment for my brothers and sisters in Christ in the Lord and continue to serve in that capacity. And I also pray for the lost, Lord. I pray that they will no longer reject you as the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Lord, but that they will come to know you, know that you truly paid for all their sins on the cross and that you absorb their wrath that they deserve and that you took it upon yourself and instead you, God, give us, you impute to us your righteousness, Christ's righteousness, so that we can live rightly according to your will and purpose. I thank you, Lord, for the work you do here tonight. And I ask all these things in Jesus name. Amen.