

AMERICA'S NEED OF REPENTANCE

Matthew 11:20-24

INTRODUCTION: In our text, Jesus announces judgment upon the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. The destruction of Chorazin and Bethsaida is so complete that their exact sites are unknown. The location of Capernaum is not positive. Jesus rebuked those cities for failing to repent. The Words of Christ to those cities have a message to us in America. We shall look closely at the city of Capernaum. We hear many asking God to bless America. God has! We are not thankful for the blessings we have yet we demand more. As Americans, we need to humble ourselves and ask God to forgive us of our sinful ways.

I. PRIVILEGES OF CAPERNAUM

- A. PRESENCE OF CHRIST. (Jesus calls Capernaum His own city in Matt. 9:1)
- B. PREACHING OF CHRIST. (Much of Christ's ministry was in Capernaum)
 - 1. Message of Christ. (Matt. 4:17)
 - 2. Miracles of Christ. (Matt. 8:5-15; Mark 1:29-31, 2:1-2; John 4:46-54)

II. PRONOUNCEMENT ON CAPERNAUM

- A. WOE'S OF THE PRONOUNCEMENT.
 - 1. Condemnation in the pronouncement.
 - a. Decree in the pronouncement. v. 23 "thou . . . shalt be brought down"
 - b. Degree in the punishment. v. 24
 - 2. Comparison in the pronouncement. v. 24
- B. WHY'S OF PRONOUNCEMENT.
 - 1. Their unbelief.
 - 2. Their unconcern.
 - 3. Their unrepentance.

III. PROSPECT FOR AMERICA

- A. RESPONSIBILITY OF AMERICA. Great privilege brings great responsibility.
 - 1. Material blessings from God.
 - 2. Spiritual blessings from God.
- B. REPENTANCE OF AMERICA.

The prospect of America's future depends upon her response to God.

LESSONS FOR LIFE:

- 1. "The things that are wrong with the country today are the sum total of all the things that are wrong with us as individuals." (Charles W. Tobey) We need to judge ourselves in the light of God's Word and repent of our sins.
- 2. America is in a moral decline. Sin brings its own judgment. Broken homes, teenage pregnancies, robberies, murders, etc. are evidence of judgment. The more sin is practiced, the more we suffer from its consequences.
- 3. The Bible gives a number of accounts of God judging nations. America will be no different. She will be judged according to the light she has received. America must turn from her sins and turn back to God.
- 4. Revival tarries because God's people have not fervently cried out to God in repentance. We must confess our own sins and the sins of our nation. Will you weep for the lost and the children of America? Must we have a national disaster before we will repent and seek God's forgiveness?

AMERICA'S NEED OF REPENTANCE

Matthew 11:20-24

INTRODUCTION: In our text, Jesus announces judgment upon the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. The destruction of Chorazin and Bethsaida is so complete that their exact sites are unknown. The location of Capernaum is not positive. Jesus rebuked those cities for failing to repent. The Words of Christ to those cities have a message to us in America. We shall look closely at the city of Capernaum. We hear many asking God to bless America. God has! We are not thankful for the blessings we have yet we demand more. As Americans, we need to humble ourselves and ask God to forgive us of our sinful ways.

I. PRIVILEGES OF CAPERNAUM

A. PRESENCE OF CHRIST.

Jesus chose Capernaum as the center for His ministry. He spent much of His time within the city. He worshipped in their synagogue. Jesus refers to Capernaum as His own city in Matthew 9:1.

B. PREACHING OF CHRIST.

1. Message of Christ. "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
(Matthew 4:17)

2. Miracles of Christ.

Jesus performed most of His mighty works in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. In the city of Capernaum He healed the centurion's servant (Matt. 8:5-13), the mother-in-law of Peter (Matt. 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31), the paralytic who was carried to Jesus by his four friends (Mark 2:1-12), the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54).

It was from the city of Capernaum Jesus called Peter, James, John and Andrew to be His disciples (Mark 1:16-21, 29). Matthew, the tax collector, was called from this same city (Matt. 9:1, 9; Mark 2:13-14).

"And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, **Hold thy peace, and come out of him.** And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about." Luke 4:31-37

"And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." Matthew 4:13-16

II. PRONOUNCEMENT ON CAPERNAUM

A. WOE'S OF THE PRONOUNCEMENT.

1. Condemnation in the pronouncement.

a. Decree in the pronouncement. v. 23 “thou . . . shalt be brought down”

b. Degree in the punishment. v. 24

“That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.” The Bible teaches degrees in punishment. Greater the light and privilege, the more grave the punishment.

2. Comparison in the pronouncement.

Capernaum's judgment would be greater than wicked Sodom. Sodom was a very sinful and wicked city. The people of Capernaum probably were moral and religious but they were indifferent to the Lord Jesus.

B. WHY'S OF PRONOUNCEMENT.

1. Their unbelief.

2. Their unconcern.

3. Their unrepentance.

“The people of Capernaum never persecuted Jesus, and few of them even criticized Him. They never mocked Him, ridiculed Him, ran Him out of town, or threatened His life. Yet their sin was worse than if they had done those things. Theirs was not the sin of violence or of immorality but of indifference.” John MacArthur

The people of Capernaum closed their ears to the preaching of Jesus and their eyes to His miracles. They failed to recognize the presence of the Savior in their city.

III. PROSPECT FOR AMERICA

A. RESPONSIBILITY OF AMERICA. “Great privilege brings great responsibility.”

1. Material blessings from God.

2. Spiritual blessings from God.

America has been blessed materially and spiritually. America is the richest nation on earth. Our wealth has been a blessing and a curse. We have enjoyed a higher standard of living that most of the world has never known. The blessing of wealth brings with it a responsibility.

America has been blessed spiritually. Our founding fathers came to these shores for religious freedom. Our laws reflect our roots in the Christian faith. Our forefathers built great Universities, colleges, hospitals, and Christian churches to spread the gospel. Many denominations sent missionaries around the world to tell of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

A Few years ago, Kirk Fordice, former governor of Mississippi made this statement:

Christianity is the predominant religion in America. We all know that's an incontrovertible fact. The media always refer to the Jewish state of Saudi Arabia, of Iran, of Iraq. We all talk about the Hindu nation of India. America is not a nothing country. It's a Christian country.

The response from many bordered on hysterical. The governor's controversial remarks landed him CNN. "Terry Eastland, publisher of The Weekly Standard, has confirmed after his in-depth study of the history of America. 'Protestant Christianity has been our established religion in almost every sense of the phrase . . . The establishment of Protestant Christianity was one not only of law but also, and far more importantly, of culture. Protestant Christianity supplied the nation with its "system of values."'

Prayer has been taken from our public schools. Christmas and Easter have been rename so not to offend others. The display of the Ten Commandments is now condemned. Some want to remove "In God we trust" from our money.

Religion is still every much alive in America. Most American's confess faith in some religion. Many profess to be Christians. Saying I am a Christian and being one is totally different. I can say that I am a bird but that does not mean I can fly. A Christian is a "new creation." His life is different from his old.

America is in moral decline. Sin has been redefined. Relativism is political correct. Tolerance is chosen over truth. We have become much like the nation of Israel during her spiritual decline, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

"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! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isa. 5:20-21)

B. REPENTANCE OF AMERICA.

The prospect of America's future depends upon her response to God. Unless the American repents, she shall go the way of all nations who forget God. In Ephesians 5 it is stated: "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things (immorality, covetousness, worship of false gods, etc.) cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

"The great awakenings of the past have been accompanied by preaching against sin, and for conviction, repentance, godly sorrow, confession and forsaking of sin, restitution, return to first works, return to the Scriptures, and prayer and witnessing and godly living." Vance Havner

"Sunday-morning Christianity is the greatest hindrance to true revival. Experience has become mere performance, 'A form of godliness, but denying the power thereof . . .'" (2 Tim. 3:5) Vance Havner

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.”

April 30, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln’s Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting Humiliation and Prayer

LESSONS FOR LIFE:

1. “The things that are wrong with the country today are the sum total of all the things that are wrong with us as individuals.” (Charles W. Tobey) We need to judge ourselves in the light of God’s Word and repent of our sins.
2. America is in a moral decline. Sin brings its own judgment. Broken homes, teenage pregnancies, robberies, murders, etc. are evidence of judgment. The more sin is practiced, the more we suffer from its consequences.
3. The Bible gives a number of accounts of God judging nations. America will be no different. She will be judged according to the light she has received. America must turn from her sins and turn back to God.
4. Revival tarries because God’s people have not fervently cried out to God in repentance. We must confess our own sins and the sins of our nation. Will you weep for the lost and the children of America? Must we have a national disaster before we will repent and seek God’s forgiveness?

