

10 *“But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 “I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. 13 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 “But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you. 15 “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! 16 “The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.”*

Last week we began this section where Jesus sends 70 messengers out, 2X2 to go to all of the cities that He had planned to visit on His way to Jerusalem. And one of the things we said is that in many ways, these 70 are a prototype of what our responsibility in the world is. We are also messengers of the coming King.

He sent them with a message. The new King is coming to your village. The old king of this world, Satan, is going to be deposed. The authority to reign of God, as opposed to Satan, in this world, embodied in Jesus the Messiah, is coming. In fact that Authority is present in the world. All of that is present in the term The Kingdom of God is at hand.

That message comes with an obvious necessity. *Choose you this day whom you will serve.* Josh 24:15 Satan is the god of this world. The new King is coming. The Messiah, the Son of God is coming. Judgement is imminent. Who will you belong to? Who will you serve?

Switching your allegiance from Satan to God requires repentance. In fact that is the very definition of biblical repentance. Lord, I'm sorry for the sin of my life in this world. My desire is to leave this world and it's sin and it's rebellious king behind, and follow you.

There is motivation for that repentance, that change. And that motivation is that sin, your sin, has offended the God who created you and rightfully owns you. Sin is a rebellion against that ownership, that Lordship, and sin must and will be judged by a righteous God.

And that introduces us to our topic this morning in the verses we read. How will the message of available redemption and forgiveness be received. Isaiah said, *"Who has believed our report?"* Who will receive the message. *Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

Isaiah 53:1 NASB

Because built into the message is a choice. To follow Jesus is to come out of this sinful world and be united to a righteous King. Repentance and obedience. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

But in opposition to that is the fact that men are born into sin, and men love their sin. We love sin. We are satisfied, OK, not really, but we think that if we can just get enough of this world, and it's sin and it's rebellion, then our souls will be satisfied.

It's that happiness thing that Paschal so aptly identified. We think sin will satisfy and we'll follow every dead end street chasing that satisfaction, instead of repenting of this rebellious world and it's sin, and following Jesus with the promise of real satisfaction, both now, and forever.

And Satan is no fool. He's a trickster. He has a thousand different ways, a satisfaction from sin tailored for every type person. Every type of mind. Satan can fix you up. He's got a satisfaction from sin dead end alley for every person, every type.

And one of them, in fact perhaps it's the main one, is religion. These communities that Jesus is sending the Seventy to, are religious. Fanatically religious. They've got the prayer rugs and their religious clothing and their genuflections and their rote prayers, their much words, and on and on and on. They are incredibly religious, and it's vomit to the God they think they serve.

Absolute vomit.

Their entire civilization, their identity, is completely lost in a false religion. And to make it more confusing, that false religion is based in judaism which derived from Moses, which is tied to the revealed truth that we still embrace to this day.

They had taken the law of Moses which was given to paint a perfect picture of our brokenness and drive us to call out to God for mercy, they had taken that law, and said, we can work our way to God. We can do this. We're not so bad. We can keep this law, or at least a showy empty hull of it. And we can genuflect our way to heaven.

And some guys show up, with miracle powers to heal and cast out demons, and they say, You're following the wrong king. And the real King who you've rebelled against is showing up. He's coming here, to your town. You need to honor the King of kings. Worship Him. He IS your Messiah.

And then what? There's only two possible reactions to *that* good news. Believe, repent, and embrace the King eternal. Or you reject the news. For a thousand reasons. *'I have bought a field and I need to go see it. Please excuse me.'* 19 *Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and I am going to try them out. Please excuse me.'* 20 *Still another said, 'I have married a wife, so I cannot come.'* ...Luke 14:19

Most of the time it isn't a violent rejection, it's just that it's an inconvenience to stop going down whatever dead end street Satan has you on, in order to follow Jesus. Hell will be full of people who politely declined.

Many of the towns the teams of 2 would get to had already heard about Jesus, and their religious leaders had already warned them not to leave their religion behind in order to have a relationship. The scribes and the pharisees wanted to keep their control on the people. False religion has a strangle hold on the people who are captured in it. Turn those two guys out. Send them away. We don't want you and we don't want Jesus. Please leave.

Last week we saw the sending. The commissioning. Let's quickly read it again to refresh our memories and set again the context of our verses this morning.

*1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. 2 And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 "Go your ways; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 "Carry no purse, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. 5 "And whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' 6 "And if a man of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 "And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. 8 "And whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you; 9 and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, '**The kingdom of God has come near to you.**'* The Authority To Reign of God has come.

This week deals with the tragedy of rejecting Jesus. This passage, these words, are the words of Jesus concerning people who reject the message of salvation, and who in doing that, also reject His Father who is God.

*10 "But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'*

Oh my. It sounds like Jesus could benefit from a re-attack at friendship evangelism. Non-confrontive evangelism that works very hard at not making anyone uncomfortable. Step back a bit Jesus. First you've got to be totally cool, so that the folks you're working with will understand that no one's calling you to be uncool. You don't have to be uncool to be a christian.

Every good pragmatist understands that a turn-or-burn message is a recipe for

defeat and failure. You don't send guys to a city and tell them Jesus is King of kings and they need to prepare to receive their King, and abandon the old king.

And then when they reject it, shake dust from your feet in protest. That's a recipe for disaster. You'll get yourself crucified if you go around teaching that.

I feel like we need to stop right here and give a little theology of judgement. That will help us understand the gravity of this passage. Listen again to a very familiar passage we all love in John 3. But keep listening beyond the familiar part.

*16“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. 18“He who believes in Him is not judged; **he who does not believe has been judged already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19“**And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.** John 3*

*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John 3:36*

We need to understand the idea of corporate wrath. This world is condemned. All of it. Every person born into this sinful world is born in sin and is condemned.

Those verses say Jesus didn't come into the world to judge the world. That's because the world is already judged. The world is already condemned. Jesus is the lifeline out of a condemned world that is about to perish.

1 Jn. 5:19 says; *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in*

*the power of the evil one.*

Blanket condemnation. Blanket judgement. The wrath of God is universal towards this lost rebellious world.

Paul paints this grave picture in very simple words that anyone can understand;

*18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Romans 1*

This world stands in condemnation. The wrath of God is waiting for a day of judgement. The whole world is under wrath. It's a condemned place.

Nobody's too concerned. When is the last time you ran into someone who 1) believed that there is a God, and 2) was concerned that they had offended that God and must therefore stand trial in His court and be condemned. Right?

No one is worried about God. No one is worried about sin. What we are worried about is climate change. The world that is in open rebellion and hatred toward God has made Greta Thunberg Time Magazine's person of the year.

The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language which publishes the most important word of the year has said the word of the year for 2019 is 'climate emergency.' While at the same time, lexicographers at Collins Dictionary named Thunberg's pioneering idea, climate strike, the word of the year.

Merriam Webster's word of the year is the pronoun; they. The other big concern of the world besides climate change is the protest against God for making males and females and all of the associated gender pronouns. The singular he and she must be replaced with the previously plural, they.

These are the things that concern the inhabitants of a planet that is condemned unclean by the person who spoke it into existence.

Luke 17 speaks of the day of judgement that is coming when the Lord, Jesus, returns to this world. Jesus describes the exact situation that I have just been speaking of. No one is worried about judgement. No one cares about a God who must judge this sinful rebellion.

*24 "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. 25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

When Noah built the ark for 120 years, no one cared. No one listened. It was business as usual. They all thought Noah was a lunatic I'm very sure. Life was incredibly normal. Food and sex. Until the day Noah went into the ark, and then, suddenly, the water came in like a tidal wave and it was over in minutes.

The men of Sodom were carrying on business as usual. Buying and selling, planting and building. Note that in the parallel of Sodom, Jesus substitutes

*marrying and giving in marriage* with buying and selling and planting. No one was one little bit concerned about God. Even after 2 angels had struck them all blind. Business as usual. No big deal. And Lot walks out of the city towards the hills, and as soon as he is a safe distance away, fire and brimstone from heaven destroyed them all.

Climate change isn't your problem. Binary genders isn't your problem. This world's problem is that because of sin and rebellion against a loving God, it stands condemned. There won't be a trial. The verdict is in. And it's very clear. Crystal clear.

This world is waiting for the hammer to fall. Judgement is coming, and it will come like the tidal wave that immediately caught the whole world off guard in Noah's day. It will come like the fire and brimstone that came down upon the people of Sodom in Abraham's day.

There's only one path to safety. Cry out to Jesus who shed His blood to pay the judgement that is due. He is gathering people from every tongue, every tribe, every ethnicity unto Himself to belong to Him and to be safe from the judgement to come.

Two guys walk into a town and it's really not so different from the two angels who walked into Sodom. 35 pairs of men walk into these villages with a message of warning. The King of kings is coming to your village. In Him is safety and security away from the judgement that is due to every sinner. This world is condemned. Run to Jesus for safety.

The first two verses in our passage this morning are the normal outflow to the truths we've labored to affirm this morning. To reject the only path to safety is grave indeed. To reject Jesus is to embrace condemnation and judgement.

*10 "But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'*



What an insult to grace! To reject a God who has sent His own Son in order to die in your place to take upon Himself the full weight of the punishment that you deserve for the sin you have committed. And then you reject Him.

The next several verses are like a diatribe. It's like a little window into the wrath, the anger of God against those who have had the opportunity to hear the gospel, with power and then they reject God's provision. They sniff at the lifeline thrown to them. They choose instead, the sin they love.

And what we will see here is that there is a relationship between the amount of evidence that God provides sinners, to the level of wrath they ultimately receive.

Apparently there are levels of indignity directly related to the level of revelation that they received. The more revelation, the more and graver the guilt.

*10 "But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' 12 "I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.*

In the day of judgement, Sodom will receive more tolerance than whatever this city is that rejects this team of 2 who have come to bear the glad tidings of redemption purchased for them with blood.

Tolerance is directly related to the level of revelation received. Sodom was wicked, but they didn't reject the Saviour. God is more angry with people who are offered salvation at the cost of the spilled blood of the Son of God, than He is with ordinary wickedness from folks who didn't have revealed truth available to them.

*13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!*

Chorazin and Bethsaida were ground zero for much of Jesus ministry in the region of Galilee. The people of Chorazin and the people of Bethsaida were eye witnesses of spectacular miracles of healings, casting out of demons. Again and again. So much privilege to see God in human flesh working miracles. So many miracles John said the world couldn't hold the books. And they still didn't believe.

*13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you.*

It's all about the level of evidence. Never before and never again had the proof that God was doing something new been evidenced with so many miracles. The miracles are the evidence that will convict the ones who witnessed them in the court of judgement of God. Greatest evidence, Greatest opportunity, Greatest sin to neglect, and Greatest judgement. Miracles are a big deal.

You say, well then, the good people of Tonopah won't have it as fierce as the folks of Bethsaida who witnessed everything and still failed to believe. Not so. Remember God's rule. 2 or 3 witnesses. We have the written record with evidence that would hold up in any court because of the many many reliable witnesses that wrote down what they saw with their own eyes.

God's written record is perhaps greater evidence in God's court than even what the eyewitnesses to the miracles saw. We have an overwhelming amount of evidence, backed up by fully reliable witnesses, and in America, the book is ubiquitous. No one in this land can stand before God and say, well how was I supposed to know.

In the heyday of the Gideon's Christian organization, not a top drawer of any nightstand anywhere in this wide land of ours failed to receive a Bible. No one has an excuse. In fact, I'd venture that Chorazin and Bethsaida might get more leniency than Tonopah and Goldfield. They got to see local miracles,

we have the written record of all of the miracles. Available to anyone.

*15 “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!”*

Capernaum where Jesus set up His home base in the Galilee. It was ground zero to so many miracles. The dead were raised back to life. The demons shrieked in terror, every illness for miles in all directions was healed. The crowds of thousands who not only saw the miracles, but heard the preaching. The Sermon of the Mount was delivered there.

And yet by and large, apparently, Capernaum enjoyed the attention, and then went blindly on its un-believing way. *15 “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!”*

The cost of unbelief is the wrath of God and eternal separation from God in hell. How very terrifying. Jesus clearly tells these 70 missionaries that city's that do not receive them are at greater risk than Sodom which was destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven. It's more grave to reject their gospel than it was for Sodom to have carried out its un-imagineable sin. Worse to reject these missionaries of Jesus.

*16 “The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.”*

These 70 men, and yes, us by extension, are the voice of Jesus and the voice of the Father to those who we clearly present the good news of forgiveness and redemption.

This rule stands today. When one of us presents the clear gospel to another, what that person does with the information is written down in this verse. If they listen to one of you, they listen to Jesus, and the Father in heaven. But if they reject you or me when we are presenting God's truth, they likewise haven't rejected you or me, they have rejected the Lord Jesus and they have rejected the Creator who grants them breath until there is no more breath.

What an astonishing thing that is to realize. As insignificant as we are; painfully insignificant; Paul says . . . *not many mighty, not many noble, God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.*

We possess the treasure that can change the trajectory of people we meet from hell to heaven. From confusion and sadness to joy.

One thing that tiny Greta Thunberg has that we seem to lack. She has a form of asperger's syndrome that causes her to focus on one thing with such purpose, she can hardly do anything else. She stopped eating, she was so focused on what she perceives as a life or death issue. To the point that her own growth was stunted.

I wish I had more of that singleness of purpose. I know the answers to the universes, and mostly, to my shame, I don't tell anybody. The tidal wave that is about to sweep in on this world in judgement is rumbling a few miles off shore, and I have not done my part to warn people of the imminent danger.

I read for you what Paul wrote about God's universal wrath against ungodliness. But immediately before that passage, Paul writes these words;

*16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."*

You know, Greta may be right. The science looks laughable to me, but the book of Revelation clearly speaks of massive climate change along with other terrors. Climate change is only one tool in God's tool kit.

We possess the only lifeline. We possess the incredible treasure.