

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 97

March 12, 2021

Thank you for joining us for another edition of The Mind of Christ. We are making our way chronologically through the life of Christ. We are following A. T. Robertson's book, "The Harmony of the Gospels" and he has divided the life of Christ into sections. We are in section 58 and we will be covering **Matthew 11:20-30**, but today we will cover half of that and next week we will cover the rest of that. So that's where we are right now; and we're going to make our way through as much of this as we can. I am excited about unpacking the mind of Christ and being able to understand how **we** can have that mind of Christ for ourselves.

This section is about woes upon the cities of opportunity. The second part will be the claims of Christ as the 'teacher' about the Father. I'll read from the New American Standard Bible.

Matthew 11:20-24

²⁰ Then He began to **reproach** the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. ²¹ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² "Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. ²³ "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ "Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."

Well, Jesus uses the word '**reproach**' here. He is bringing reproach upon these people. The word here is "oneidezo" (ονειδεζως); it means to defame, or to nail at, or to chide or taunt, or to cast in one's teeth, to revile or to upbraid. This word is found only two other times in the book of Matthew. **Matthew 5:11** Jesus says this reproach can happen to us as Christians; that we can be insulted or come under reproach because of our relationship with Christ. It's also found in **Matthew 27:44** where it is the insults or reproaches of the robbers who were crucified with Jesus; and they derailed or reproached Jesus as they were nailed to the cross. Then, in **Mark 16:14** Jesus reproached the disciples for their unbelief and their hardness of heart for not accepting the testimony of those who saw Jesus after His resurrection. So, there are many occasions for the idea of '**reproach**.'

This word is also used in **Romans 15:3** regarding the reproaches of Christ. "For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." The reason He was reproached was because it was a result of His not "pleasing Himself". Had he "pleased Himself", He could have avoided the reproaches of people but because He didn't, He was reproached. Then it's used in **James 1:5**, "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." God gives wisdom to those who ask "without reproach". What does that mean? Well, He gives generously. When we come to Him for wisdom, He doesn't reproach us; He doesn't say something like, "Well that's enough. Don't take too much wisdom." No, He says take all you want, as much as you need. You're welcome to take the

wisdom. Then it's used in **1 Peter 4:14**, Peter speaks of being reviled or reproached for the name of Christ. "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you."

The focus of these rebukes was three cities: Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. I call it the "trio of unbelief". These are all cities of Galilee along the northern shore of Galilee. This is where Jesus spent a considerable amount of time, and I've previously written quite a bit on this, especially on the city of Capernaum. Nazareth, I believe, could have been included in this as well, but it's not in the same exact geographical location.

Jesus is clearly not happy with these cities which have had considerable opportunities to *repent*; but they became *takers* of the blessings of the Messiah, of His generous gifts, but not followers. They were not workers. In other words, they received all the blessings of the healings and miracles that Jesus did but it did not turn into their actually *repenting* of their sins and following Jesus. He contrasts these 'other' cities with these three cities and so in contrast He talks about Tyre and Sidon and Sodom as cities who, had they had the same miracles done in them, Jesus says they would have repented. This is an insulting rebuke since these cities are notorious for their *wickedness* and for their *pride*. So, what Jesus is saying to these three cities in Galilee is *not a compliment* at all.

We get some major insight into Jesus' mind in this section. Jesus does not like to be ignored, to be treated lightly, to be taken for granted or to be unappreciated. His mission is the most serious mission of all time; and His gifts are being enjoyed, but not seen as the means of great faith and great commitment.

The text says most of His miracles were done in these cities. Long lines of sick folks were brought to Him as we have already seen, but it still is interesting to hear Matthew say this. So Galilee was the region where the most miracles were performed, far from Jerusalem; and this makes sense regarding Jesus' pacing Himself and not wanting His popularity to increase too rapidly ... a factor that played into His execution.

As we have also seen before, Jesus will pronounce 'woes' as well as 'blessings'. He came to bless, but for those who won't listen to Him, He pronounces woes. And we'll see even more of those as we get near the end of His life. Such would be very ominous for someone living there.

I do not know where Jesus was when He made these statements. We do know from our itinerary that He had been in Capernaum; then He went to Nain where He raised the widow's son, and then He had a discourse with the disciples of John the Baptist and now He is having this one. My guess is that He's back in Capernaum; He's back in the area where these cities are. It makes the most sense.

Let's consider that the response was so different in Nain than in Capernaum that such comments were prompted by Jesus. In other words, He went to Nain and He did a great miracle. He raised a boy from the dead and He was well received, He was believed on and a great response was there. However, in Capernaum where He did even more miracles, He was not as well received.

Consider also, the doubts that were associated with John's disciples. He wanted to call attention to the eternal consequences of *not repenting* and *not believing*. In other words, He is saying to them, *it's okay to question Me*, *it's okay for you to want to be sure*, **but** when I point you to the miracles, *you need to listen to those things and you need to observe them and you need to draw the conclusion that I am the Son of God and that you need to repent and put your faith in Me*.

Now remember Jesus' teaching and comments often are occasioned by circumstances and He puts things into *perspective*. That's what Jesus does. That's one of the main reasons we study the life of Jesus ... because we see Him in all of these different circumstances and we see how He is able to give *His perspective* as to how to look at things.

The purpose of miracles is testimony leading to belief. **John 20:30-31**, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." I believe that's King James, that's the way I memorized it. In **Hebrews 2:1-4** it says that God *bore witness* to Jesus' message both by signs and wonders and by the various miracles and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Now *such should not be taken lightly*. Imagine sitting in a jury box with Jesus on trial and His Father God being called to the stand to testify, and we're the jury and *we discount God's testimony* either by saying it's not believable or saying that it is insufficient to prove Jesus' identity! How could men be so bold to dismiss the testimony of the God of the universe! It reminds me of **James 2:4** where he talks about judges with evil thoughts; "have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?"

The accreditation purposes of miracles has been downplayed, I believe, and replaced by the view that Jesus didn't want anyone sick or unhappy. Well, that's not primarily *why He healed people*. I'm sure He had compassion for them and He wanted to help them, but His *main reason for healing* people was not just simply so they wouldn't be sick and wouldn't be unhappy. If His purpose was to eliminate all sick people, He could have done so with one word, all at one time. But *establishing evidence* and *eyewitness testimony* required more time. Jesus had to go through these various healings, raising people from the dead, casting out demons; He had to do that one story at a time in order to *establish His credentials*.

The appropriate outcome was *repentance*. That is what Jesus said miracles should lead us to; to repentance. Jesus and John always taught repentance. The idea of repentance comes actually from two words. It means to *think differently* or *afterward*. It means to reconsider, to come under compunction. To repent is again two words, "meta" (μετα) which means "change" and "noeo" (νοεω) which is the word for "mind". It means "to change one's mind"; it's a turning from unbelief and sin. Paul even mentions his own unbelief as a state from which he needed to change (**1 Timothy 1:13**). He says he acted ignorantly in unbelief. The *reproach* and the "woe" were directly correlated to non-repentance. Jesus even stresses how serious this is by saying, "they would have repented long ago".

The delay or procrastination was not acceptable. They should have *run* to repentance, hurried to change, but it was not a priority. They accepted the blessings of Christ being in their towns, but at no personal cost to them. They enjoyed all the blessings but they did not *invest themselves* in those blessings.

Jesus continues by saying “in sackcloth and ashes”. *How would they have repented?* He even stresses that the repentance would have been accompanied by *sackcloth and ashes*. So what is sackcloth?

Well, the word sounds a lot like sack. The word in the Greek is ‘sakkos’ (σακκος). The Hebrew word would probably be translated “mohair”. The Hebrew is actually very similar. It is ‘saq’, a mesh that allows a liquid to run through it. It’s something that is very coarse, like a loose cloth or sacking like a bag for grain or like a burlap sack. It’s not tightly woven, which means it’s not as smooth. It has a lot of things that are scratchy if you will. It’s used often in the Old Testament. We’ll look at some of these places.

It’s used first by Jacob in **Genesis 37:34** who put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son Benjamin. Then David orders the people to put it on when he was mourning Abner’s death, his general, in **2 Samuel 3:31**. Then there’s a scene in **2 Samuel 21:10** where a concubine of Saul spread a sackcloth bed to guard the bodies of Saul and Jonathan until David came to bury them. In **1 Kings 20:31** shows sackcloth used in begging here for one’s very life. It shows the seriousness of the circumstance.

In **1 Kings 21:27**, a sad story of Ahab coveting Naboth’s vineyard, Naboth wouldn’t sell it, and Ahab refused to eat, and Jezebel plotted to have Naboth killed so Ahab could have the vineyard. God saw this injustice and He sent Elijah to Ahab to prophecy his death and that the dogs would lick his blood in the place where Naboth was stoned. Ahab responded in repentance. He tore his clothes, he put on sackcloth and he fasted. He went about despondent, it says. This caused God to change His mind, but later Ahab was killed in battle and the dogs did lick his blood it says, in **1 Kings 22:38**. So Ahab did repent over that incident with Naboth but he became wicked again he eventually succumbed to what God said would happen to him. *Notice what happens; when we change our mind*, guess what God does. He changes His mind. So, one of the reasons we repent is so that God will relent and not bring upon us the woes or the destruction that He has promised.

In **2 Kings 6:30** the king of Israel was distressed over the siege of Samaria, so he wore sackcloth underneath his clothes next to his body. He tore his robes when he heard two women arguing over eating their babies, but he blamed the situation on Elisha, the messenger. So, as they were under siege, horrible things were happening in the city and this king put on sackcloth to mourn the destruction that was going on. In **2 Kings 19:1** Hezekiah covers himself with sackcloth over the threat to Judah by Assyria and when he did so, others followed him.

In **1 Chronicles 21:16** David and the elders covered themselves with sackcloth and they fell on their faces when they saw the sword of the Lord’s angel over Jerusalem. Then in **Nehemiah 9:1** the people of Jerusalem assembled in sackcloth and had dirt thrown on them, or dust thrown on them.

In **Esther 4:1** Mordecai, Esther's uncle, put on sackcloth and ashes wailing loudly because of the plot to destroy the Jews. In **Esther 4:2** it notes that no one could enter the king's gate wearing sackcloth. It was forbidden to enter in through that gate wearing sackcloth. In **Esther 4:3**, the Jews throughout the land lay on sackcloth because of the impending danger that was coming. In **Esther 4:4** Esther sent Mordecai some new garments to replace his sackcloth, but he refused to put them on.

Then, in the Book of Job, **Job 16:15** you would expect to find some sackcloth in such a story. Job sewed sackcloth and one translation says that he 'thrust his horn into the dust'; another translation says it was his brow. In other words, he just put his head down into the dust. In **Psalms 30:11** David's mourning was turned to dancing and his sackcloth was loosed and he was girded with gladness. The **Psalms 35:13** wears sackcloth for his enemies while they taunt him. A similar situation is found in **Psalms 69:11**, "When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them."

Then **Isaiah 3:24** offers a stark contrast. Instead of fine clothing, sackcloth is worn. In **Isaiah 20:2** Isaiah is told to loosen his sackcloth and go around naked and barefoot. In **Isaiah 32:11** the women who are at ease are told to strip and put on sackcloth around their waist. There is a time to celebrate and there's a time for mourning. **Isaiah 50:3** says the heavens are clothed in blackness and sackcloth because of the distress of the people of God. In **Isaiah 58:5** Isaiah questions whether or not the outward signs of their fasting, which included wearing sackcloth, if it was really an indication of a real fast; because people can put on sackcloth, he's basically saying, and still not 'feel' the kind of remorse that they should be feeling.

In **Jeremiah 4:8** and in **6:26** Jeremiah teaches them to mourn and tells them to put on sackcloth and to roll in the ashes. Jeremiah is known as "the weeping Prophet" so he is telling the people you need to learn how to mourn, you need to learn how to repent, you need to learn how to wear sackcloth and roll around in the ashes.

In **Ezekiel 7:18** and again in **27:31** he spoke of the practice. Daniel did the same in **Daniel 9:3**. Joel teaches it in **Joel 1:8, 13** and so does Amos in **Amos 8:10**. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah and they put on sackcloth and rolled around in the ashes, **Jonah 3:5**.

In **Revelation 6:12** the terror is described as the sun as black as sackcloth and then the two witnesses who prophesy for 1260 days in **Revelation 11:3**. So what's the point of sackcloth and ashes?

The Latin word for sackcloth is the word cilicium. It is a covering made of goat hair from a place called Cilicia. From that came the Latin word cilicium. It means a coarse, black goat hair. It produces discomfort or pain and the practice is ancient, perhaps predating written history. It represents repentance and atonement. It seems these are the main reasons that "sackcloth" or "hair shirts" were worn; for mourning, for loss, repentance for sin and impending danger like invading armies. The outward discomfort or pain mirrored what was happening on the inside of the person ... that they were in great distress. A period of wearing this itchy garment would serve as a reminder of the grief process.

Ashes may be better read, “*dust*”. So it’s not maybe just ashes like we think of something burned, it may be *dust*. It symbolizes some kind of annihilation or extinction; something like the idea that ‘we came from the dust and we’re going to return to dust from which we were made’ (Ecclesiastes 3:20). Others see dust as what is trodden underfoot and represents the “downtrodden” feeling of the mourner. *Jesus doesn’t demand this practice but He recognizes it* as an appropriate response to sin if it is heartfelt.

Many ascetics adopted this practice and cilicium products such as rings and belts can be found online all meant to produce discomfort. You can actually go on line and buy products and they are called Cilicium products that are meant to be worn to cause discomfort in times of repentance and fasting.

Should we have some type of outward way of expressing mourning, repentance or impending danger? Does modern society take these matters too lightly? Are the changing cultural morays an indication of a change on the inside? Our psyches seem to be less inclined to weeping for sin, or earnest prayer, or other outward forms of expression of repentance. It’s interesting to compare these ancient practices with the lack of it in modern days, and all of this with the ‘mind of Christ’ in mind. Would Jesus want us to be more demonstrative today in our repentance? Would He wonder if something were wrong with us?

Jesus uses the term in this section about these cities. He says it would be ‘**more tolerable**’. He’s says it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah and these other cities ...” The actual phrase “more tolerable” means “*more endurable*”. I’m not sure, really, exactly what this means. If Hell is the outcome for these cities, all of them, then how can Hell be more endurable for one than for another? Jesus uses it also in **Matthew 10:15** regarding cities who will not respond to the teaching of the apostles. “Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.”

Here, His reference is to Sodom and Gomorrah. Is Jesus just using this for effect; those really bad people will be better off than you? So we have two questions:

1. What are the spiritual circumstances that make the difference?
2. What is the significant difference in the consequences in the Judgment? That is, “are there degrees of punishment, and if so, are there degrees of reward?”

The first question may center around responsibility based on opportunity. *What did the people of Sodom know, and have opportunity to know, based on the opportunities that they had ... versus ... the people of Capernaum?* The differences seem to be significant. Capernaum had **Jesus** the most complete revelation from God! But Sodom had Abraham, a very important witness who is the Old Testament type of faith. “Romans” makes much of this responsibility based on opportunity. Creation, conscience, the Jewish experience including the Law were all sources of opportunity to know God, to be held accountable. The bottom line is all are without excuse (**Romans 1:20**).

So, how can one have some advantage over the other?

Well, Jesus also taught to whom much is given, much is required (**Luke 12:48**). Based on this, I personally am among the top **1%** of ‘accountable people’ in the world. There is no excuse for me; but am I *more* accountable than Capernaum? Blessed are those who haven’t seen yet, and believe.

The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in **Luke 16**, I believe, figures in with this. The rich man is in torment and he begs to return to warn his brothers. Abraham tells him that they have *Moses and the prophets*; let the brothers hear them. *Not even one raised from the grave* would have made a difference. Maybe it would have in Sodom.

Regarding the first matter, this also supposes that Jesus would know how these ancient cities would have reacted if they had had more revelation ... which *raises another question!* *If God knows someone would repent “with more revelation”, then why doesn’t He provide more*? Why does one city get an excess of revelation and another, a lack of it?

Does 1 Peter 3 passage about “Jesus preaching to the souls in prison”, these lost during the flood ... does it figure in here? Does Jesus go back and give some another opportunity to repent? The epistemic distance, fancy phrase, fancy idea is that God provides enough evidence to lead people to repentance and salvation, but not so much overwhelming evidence that they could not repent or do ‘otherwise’.

All of this is very difficult. Where there is no law, there is no sin; and if not sin, then no lostness and no need for salvation. But the whole world is accountable, excepting for babies and mentally retarded folks. This *must be* an area where we trust that God knows exactly how to administer His grace and His judgment. John 3 says all judgment has been placed into the hands of Jesus. What wisdom He must have to manage eternal judgment on the lives of the entire world! What a caseload.

The second question has to do with the difference in *punishment* or *reward*. Surely this has been discussed often down through the years. Will the fire be hotter for some than for others? If Hell is annihilation, then will it take longer for some than for others? What does one have to “endure” that others do not have to endure? *If something is going to be endured, then there must be an existence and consciousness for a period of time.* The idea of degrees of torture is not new. We still debate it in our own times regarding interrogation practices. Is water-boarding the worst? It seems like a minor one compared to some ancient or not-so-ancient practices like being drawn and quartered or skinning a person alive. And does God think in terms of making some tortures worse than others?

In our justice system we always, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated systems, think in terms of graduated consequences. *We “grade” penalties from parking tickets to murder.* So, there does seem to be the same idea in God’s and Jesus’ thinking. It seems to be universal. The consequences begin on Earth; **an example, the destruction of Sodom seems to be finalized in the Day of Judgment.**

Matthew uses this four times; **Matthew 10:15, Matthew 11:22, Matthew 11:24** and **Matthew 12:36**. There, in this context, and the one about giving an account for every careless word that we speak, He talks about this idea of the consequences of our actions.

Paul uses it in **Romans 2:5** where he says, “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” This captures exactly what Jesus is saying. Peter uses it in **2 Peter 3:7**. The present heaven and earth are being reserved for fire *kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men*. This judgment and wrath is directed at the stubborn, the unrepentant and the ungodly.

Now John turns it into a positive in **1 John 4:17**. “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.” So we have confidence in the Day of Judgment because we are becoming like Christ. Also **Jude 6**; that the angels are being “kept” for judgment. “The angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” To fully study this, there are many other ways to “reference” this Day. It will surely be an awesome day. The song says “*There’s a Great Day Coming*”. But for many, it will be a sad day. I cannot begin to imagine God’s judging ability on that day, as to judging what is righteous in every individual case in every person who has ever lived.

But another twist in Jesus’ comments is He is not speaking in terms of individuals but cities. Is this merely accommodative language or is there some group judgment that goes on? Revelation 2 and 3 speaks of this regarding the seven churches though individuals are singled out for exceptions; wholesale and retail judgment. There is often a reluctance for us as individuals to break from the crowd. We are followers.

For Capernaum, He contrasts the options of “being exalted to the heaven” versus “shall descend to Hades”. Heaven and Hades, the idea is one of up and down; it’s ingrained even in Jesus’ thinking ... the good go up and the bad go down.

Heaven is fairly generic depending on the context. Here, it is associated with exultation. It’s associated also with dignity and imminence and loftiness; being lifted up. **Matthew 23:12** uses this about exalting oneself. In **Luke 1:52** the humble are exalted. An example is given in **Luke 18:14**. John speaks of Jesus being ‘lifted up’ or ‘exalted’ just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (**John 3:14-15**). In **John 8:28** *Jesus says we begin to know truth when we lift up the Son of Man. When lifted up He draws men to Himself* (**John 12:32**). The crowd understands “lift up” as the opposite of “remaining forever”. Peter speaks of Jesus being exalted to the right hand of God in **Acts 2:33**, and in **Acts 5:31** *Jesus is exalted as a Prince and a Savior to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel*. Then in **Acts 13:17** *God leads His people out of Egypt with an uplifted or exalted arm*. Paul speaks of humbling himself by preaching without charge so that the Corinthians could be exalted (**2 Corinthians 11:7**). James tells us to humble ourselves in God’s presence and **He** will lift you up. And Peter says the same in **1 Peter 5:6** but he adds, “... at the proper time”.

Well, Capernaum did not humble herself before the Lord in her midst. She ignored **Greatness** among them. By doing so, they fell to the depths, to Hades, the lower regions of existence. In **Matthew 16:8** Jesus says the gates of Hades will not prevail, even against the church. And the rich man of **Luke 16:23** lifted up his eyes in Hades; and he was in torment.

From this we know that this is not a neutral place; it can have a very dark side. In **Acts 2:27** it says that Jesus was not abandoned to Hades, speaking of His Spirit, even as His body did not undergo decay. In **Revelation 1:18** Jesus has the keys of death and Hades; only He can get you out. **Revelation 6:8** death and Hades are often used together. “I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him.” Then, in **Revelation 20:13-14** Hades can give up her dead and will, one day, be destroyed in the lake of fire.

Who better to know about Hades than Jesus who created it? Why? What is the purpose of Hades? What is the relationship of Hades to Heaven and Hell? Is Hades good or bad? Are there two compartments in Hades, paradise and torment? Does **Luke 16** describe it? In this context, Hades does not seem positive, and it is contrasted with Heaven, but this may be simply a play on up is good and down is bad.

The idea of Sodom remaining ‘to this day’ is interesting (**Matthew 11:23**). And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. The word for remaining is “meno” (μὲνω). I assume it means, instead of being destroyed, Sodom would continue to exist as a city. Certain cities when destroyed were said to ‘never be rebuilt’ like Babylon and Tyre. You can research that in the Old Testament.

But this raises the question of the relationship between repentant nations or cities and sustainability. In other words, if a nation or a city or a people repent, does God sustain that nation? Is it right to warn people that their continued existence or protection depends on their faithfulness to God? This certainly seems to be a key teaching; especially in the Old Testament. **2 Chronicles 7:14** comes to mind: “and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

The idea of leaven both positive and negative comes to mind. God’s people are salt, preserving the nation by their positive influence. And does this repentance have to be with the right motive or focus; that is on humbling oneself before God? *There are many reasons one might change that has nothing to do with God.*

Let’s say a community cleaned up “sin” like prostitution or theft or drug abuse and ministered to the homeless and abused and neglected children all out of simply wanting to have a better way of life or to increase property values. Would God sustain this city even though they did not acknowledge Him in this process? It seems that *Jesus’ point was He was being ignored*. Old Testament examples always tie repentance to ‘*repentance before God*’, so community good works might be for the Christian a ‘repentance response’ to Jesus, but community partners may join in *for their own reasons*.

So, the mind of Christ; He lives with an expectation. He expects people to respond to His work in the way intended. They are free to respond however they like, but they must accept the consequences of their non-response. Therefore, *our message must include this thinking* even though it is not politically correct.

In our day, goodness is *the new God*. Our “goodness” coupled with good intentions should be sufficient to **earn** us a place among the honorable citizens of the land. We forget; no one is righteous; no not one (**Romans 3:10**). And only One is good. *That is not us*, so what we do must fit into this paradigm. How do we get this across to our culture?

Remember, it didn't go over very well in Jesus' day. It contributed to His death. People like 'causes' but they do not want to give up their personal control. *They want to maintain autonomy and serving that makes them masters of their own ship.*

Jesus says the beginning point of discipleship is surrender. We reposition ourselves to be listeners; servants to lay aside our own desires and goals. *Everything orients to Jesus.* Bringing this message to the city; to **our city**; demands some boldness and willingness to be ridiculed. Our perspective must be as Jesus' was.

There is a Day of Judgment when individuals and cities will give an account for their stewardship of the earth, their families, their social institutions, their businesses, their religions or religious institutions and their schools ... their very lives.

The evaluations are going on now and Jesus is taking note of how we are responding to Him. An awareness of our part is needed. *Jesus will not be ignored.* He will not be ignored.

So, considering how would Jesus look at our city; how would He look at our community? Even if we were “good people” going about doing “good things”; if we're not doing it out of repentance; if we're not doing it out of our relationship with God, out of our recognition of Jesus as being the Lord and Savior of us all; if we're not doing it out of that purpose, then I wonder if any of our good works really mean anything in God's sight. It might make our world a little nicer place to live, but I'm not sure it has anything to do with God recognizing our relationship with Him.

Well, thank you for joining us today. We will look at another part of this section next time and you can go to our website <https://www centralsarasota.org/> and find a lot of different things that we've done now and archived for your learning.

So, God bless and have a great day.