

February 6

Scriptures: Read Matthew 11

Key Verse: Matthew 11:28 “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,”

Overview

In this chapter, we have two contrasting sides of Jesus’ ministry portrayed. First of all, He very bluntly and directly condemns Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, cities that were not repenting of their sin, not listening to His message of the kingdom. He’s telling them that Tyre and Sidon would have been much more responsive to the gospel message than these cities; that is, the Gentile cities would have heard Him, whereas the Jewish cities seemed to ignore Him. He warns them that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than it will be for them. But then, secondly, He turns around and says that He is grateful to His Father in heaven that He has hidden the realities of the kingdom from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

Jesus heart is obviously moved by the gently souls, the spiritually impoverished ones who humbly and shyly approach Him. As He looks about and sees these dear ones, these weary, burdened and tired people, He says, “Come to Me, I’ll give you rest. If you are going to work, take My yoke upon yourself rather than the yoke of the world. Understand that I am not a hard taskmaster but in working with Me, who am gentle and humble in heart, you will find rest for your souls. My yoke is easy, my burden is light.” In some ways, you might wonder at this, in that His disciples lived stressful lives, and in some cases met untimely and violent death. On the other hand, that inner peace, that peace that passes understanding, that sense of security, that sense of destiny, of being a part of a greater plan, is such an overpowering and overwhelming thing that earthly stresses and strains are put into perspective. How else can we explain the seeming joy and peace of the martyrs throughout the centuries who have gone to their deaths praising the Lord? How else do you explain those who have lived a life of poverty and deprivation for the sake of the gospel, not asking anything for themselves?

Obviously, Jesus is onto something here. He knows something that we should know and it’s this: we have been created for eternal life and should be looking to the far horizon to discover the real meaning of life and the focus of our souls.

Prayer

Oh God, may we realize that when we come to You, we find rest for our souls, even in the midst of our earthly stresses.