

Scripture Matt:11:20-24

²⁰ Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. ²¹ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. ²⁴ For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Supplemental Scriptures: Proverbs 3:1-12, John 9:13-41

What are the Characteristics of negative Cooperate Character shown by these 3 Cities Christ condemns.

a. **Poor Priorities:** Traditions, personalities, Money today is often more of a focus in some churches than the gospel. In others political action on ethical issues that are out of kilter with God's word. Notice Jesus words about Sodom... Many Christians look at Sodom's judgment as God's indictment of homosexuality, and what Jesus said, was if they saw the many miracles he did they would not be destroyed, and that a Hebrew town would have it worse in the judgment, not because of their sin, but their lack of repentance! Pastor Val said that we can't allow the media to control our priorities as Christians. Matt 11:20-24

b. **Carnality:** Being Lukewarm like the Laodicean church of Rev 3:14-22. Being like the world, and mixing our Walk and practices with world. These three towns were still Jewish towns, but in the time of the Roman occupation, there were many gentiles in the region and it was known to have many gentiles, one reason many gentiles came to Jesus during this time, but he was sent to the house of Abraham. Some archeological research suggests that in the synagogues of this region, there were often sculptures of Medusa on the walls. Things of the world sneak in, and Miracles don't overcome them.

c. **Spiritual Blindness:** Not knowing one is blind: Loosing one's senses- deafness & blindness to Spiritual things, causing misattribution. John 9:35-41. This is troublesome because one can't tell they are blind. This is why God can make the wise seem foolish, they don't know they are in their pride. This often leads to lack of appreciation of what is right in front of your face- Like gifts and miracles. Instead of praising God for the gifts and singing songs for the miracles, you filter them around traditions, fitting in, other self centeredness etc. rather than truly seeking God. There is a great curse on the wise and the gifted if they seek their own way- Hell- a Place for the creature(s) who were the most gifted and should know better to be punished.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think God judges those who should know better more harshly? Can you think of times when you have done this?
2. We often think of repenting as turning away from sin, rather than turning away from independence and self centeredness. The Pharisees didn't see much sin to turn away from, but were focused on their agenda so much so they couldn't see that their agenda was not God's. Can you think of a time when you may have done this or been hurt by such a mindset.
3. Thanksgiving is a corporate event, where we give thanks as a family. What is the power of cooperate thanks, prayer, worship? How can we create a culture where this is more common in a culture that is so individualistic?
4. The opposite of love is not really hate, but self love and centeredness. Since God is love, it is crucial to worship God and appreciate those around us in order to create a healthy community. What are some things that can distract us as individuals and as churches from focusing on free and true worship?

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*Sow with a view to righteousness,
Reap in accordance with kindness;
Break up your fallow ground,
For it is time to seek the Lord
Until He comes to rain righteousness on you.*
Hosea 10:12