

# Woe, Judgment, and Hell

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If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Luke 10, where we're going to be looking at verses 13–16.

Let's say you're watching somebody from a great distance. You're on the rim of [a] canyon, you have some very powerful binoculars, and you're looking down into the canyon. You see a man in a little rubber raft. He's kicked back, he's got his sunglasses, a little floppy-brimmed hat, [and] his legs are hanging over the edge. He's floating peacefully down the river, unaware that he is approaching a vertical cataract, a 300-foot waterfall that drops down into large, jagged boulders below. It would be terrible to stand there, too far away to do anything, unable to warn the man, and just watch him in those binoculars as he went off the edge to his doom and died. How would you cope with that? You might say, "Well, surely there were signs down there that the man should have seen along the bank. Surely he should have heard the waters as they were thundering as he approached the waterfall."

What if you were on the bank? What if you saw the man get into the raft and get ready to paddle out? You look at the man, and say, "Sir! Look at the sign. It says, 'Warning! Severe water hazard: 300-foot vertical drop waterfall ahead.'"

The man says, "Don't bother me. I'm on vacation! I'm here to relax. Chill out," and he paddles out into the current.

So you repeat [yourself], and say, “Sir! Come back! There’s a waterfall!” You plead with him, [and] you beg him to come into the shore.

Soon, several other people are yelling at him, “Sir! Come in! Come in!”

Yet he’s waving you off with calm neglect, [saying], “Don’t bother me. I’m relaxing!”

You realize something is wrong with this man. You run up to your car, grab a rope, [and] run down to the bank as he is slowly approaching the waterfall. You throw out the line, it lands right across him, and he just lets it slither across his body. You say, “Grab it! Grab it!” and he just lets it go. You reel it in, create a noose, and you lasso his feet. You begin to pull him into the side, and he gets irritated, pulls off the noose, and says, “Leave me alone! I’m relaxing!”

Finally, you realize [that] it’s desperate. You’re frantic. You run to the shore, find a branch, hold it out to him, and say, “Grab the branch! Grab it!” Then he goes off over the edge. You hear this scream [as it] fades into the thunder of the waterfall, and he’s gone.

How would you deal with that? How would you cope with that? You’d probably be a little bit angry, wouldn’t you? You’d be angry that [the] guy would not listen to you. You would be angry because you pointed the sign out to him. You warned him. Other people warned him. You threw him a lifeline, you lassoed his feet, you extended a branch, but he would not hear it, and he perished. You might even conclude, “Well, he got what was coming to him. It’s what he asked for, and that’s what he got.”

This morning, we return to an account in Luke where Jesus is preparing the seventy as He’s going to send them out. We’ve already looked in verses 1–12, where Jesus gives them twelve principles [for] doing evangelism. The last principle was: If nothing else works—if the miracles don’t work, if the repetitious gospel presentation doesn’t work—then threaten judgment. “[For] those cities that reject you, your miracles, and your gospel presentation,” He says, “it will be more tolerable in the day of Sodom’s judgment than for them.”

That was leading up to our text for this morning. Verse 12 is an interesting verse because in [it] Jesus switches from telling the seventy (some versions say seventy-two) what to say to people and what to do toward those people, to pronouncing a judgment on those who will, in the future, reject [the] teaching [of the seventy]. Verse 12 is interesting in that Jesus stops the instruction and utters a word of fact: “And if they do reject you, they will be judged.” Then He says, in verses 13–16 what will happen to those cities that have already rejected the gospel. That is what we are going to look at this morning.

We already noted that the cities of the plain and Sodom and Gomorrah didn’t have anybody come and preach the gospel and do miracles. God just judged them utterly and completely, without warning. That is why those who hear the message and reject [it] have a greater condemnation.

Follow along in your Bibles as I read Luke 10:13–16. Jesus says:

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. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! 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.

From this text, you will hear Jesus’ twofold promise of judgment on those who reject the gospel truth, and then the reason why [they are judged]. You will see God’s justice, His holiness, and His grace in this text in the destruction of those who will not repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ though they are warned.

Our first point is: Woe to you who reject the gospel of God’s grace. Look at verse 13: “Woe to you, Chorazin!” The word “woe” in this context

means “judgment, disaster, damnation.” It is an imprecation. Do you know what that is? It’s a pretty big word. In the psalms there are what are called “imprecatory prayers,” and that is when the psalmist prays down judgment on the enemies of Israel, where he says to God, “God, judge them. Destroy them!” That is called an “imprecation.” Here, [in Luke 10:13], Jesus is uttering an imprecation against Chorazin. He says, “Woe to you, Chorazin!” He’s going to explain in verse 15 what that means. Chorazin was one of the cities located north of the Sea of Galilee. It was one of the cities where Jesus performed the majority of His miracles.

Look in the middle of verse 13. The same pronouncement is made against a different city: “Woe to you, Bethsaida!” Bethsaida was also located north of the Sea of Galilee. It was the town of Andrew, Peter, and Philip. It was the town where Jesus fed 5,000 men plus women and children, where He healed a blind man. Look down at verse 15: “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you?” Notice that Jesus does not say, “Woe” here, what He does do is explain what “woe” means. The implied answer to the question, “[You], Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you?” is “No, certainly not.” If Capernaum is not going to be exalted to heaven, then where [is it] going to be demoted to? Look at the end of verse 15: “You will be brought down to Hades!” “Hades” is a synonym for hell. It is an equivalent, a counterpart, of the Old Testament Sheol. It is the place where the damned go to suffer torment and anguish until the Great White Throne Judgment of Christ at the end of the age [see Revelation 20:11].

What is interesting is [that] there is a little translation thing here that the translators in all the major translations left out. For instance, if you go to Ephesians 2:8—that’s a verse a lot of you know—it says: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves.” In normal English, you would probably write: “You have been saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves.” Why did they put “by grace” up front in that verse? [It is] because in Greek, when you want to emphasize a certain point, you can take that [point] and put it up front in the sentence. So,

because the Greek has “grace” up front, all the translations translate it “By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves.” Well, here [in Luke 10:15], the text reads: “You will be brought down to Hades!” The problem is [that] “to Hades” is put up front [in the Greek]. It should read: “To Hades you will be brought down!” It is an emphatic statement, emphasizing the certainty of the judgment of those in Capernaum.

Capernaum was also located north of the Sea of Galilee. It was the headquarters of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus ministered there, and He kept returning to that city, so they had many exposures to [Him]. In the parallel text to ours in Matthew 11:20, Matthew comments that Jesus “began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent,” and then mentions those cities, Capernaum being one of them. Think about this. You’re in one of these three cities, and Jesus comes into town. [He] comes strolling in, people are doing their daily business, and Jesus cries out, and says, “Bring your sick to Me. All you who are ill, all you who are diseased, maimed, blind, come to Me!”

People start coming out, going, “Who is that?”

Pretty soon people begin to gather. There’s a man with a twisted foot, and he comes up to Jesus, and says, “Well, can you heal me?”

Jesus says, “Be healed,” and [the man’s] foot is instantly cured. The man looks down, and he begins to laugh and cry.

Another man comes up, and says, “I’m almost blind. I can barely see. Can you heal me?”

Jesus says, “Be healed.”

The man begins to weep, [and says], “I can see! He has healed me!” Pretty soon people start fetching grandma, and grandpa, and brother, and sister, and neighbor—anybody who has any illness, any “ism,” any “schism,” any disease, anything. He heals them all, and while they’re all standing around in this big mob, amazed, stunned, marveling, Jesus tells them that He is the Son of Man, that He is the promised one of David, that He is the Messiah who has come to save them from their sins if they will repent and believe in Him. A few are smitten. A few are overcome with

guilt, and despair, and see their sin, and they repent, and they believe, and they are saved. Others are offended. Others are jealous. Others wonder who this guy is.

The religious leaders begin to ask Jesus pointed questions, seeing who He is. Jesus answers them with profound simplicity, and the people marvel. They look and they watch as the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Messiah dialogues with the religious leaders. He teaches them things they have never heard before, and they are all very impressed. The problem is [that] most of them don't think they need to repent of anything. They're Jews, the chosen people! Come on! They have the prophets, they have the promises, they're saved and they're on their way to heaven. They want to see more miracles: "Give us another sign!"

This goes on for days, and soon, Jesus says, "I'm moving on," and He [heads] off and goes to one of the other three cities. He does the same thing there. After a while, maybe a month or two of traveling, [Jesus] comes back to Capernaum again. He preaches more, He heals a few more, [and] He's rejected again. This happens time [and again]—maybe a third time, a fourth time, a fifth time, a sixth time, who knows? It was His home base, He kept coming back there, and back there, and back there, and they kept rejecting, and rejecting, and rejecting. That is why Jesus' message to them is: "Woe! Judgment! Hell! You, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? No! To Hades you will be cast down!" God tried to lasso them with His grace, but they untied the rope from their feet and pushed Him away. The branch of the gospel was extended to them and they would not grab it. So Jesus' only message to them is: "Woe!"

Second: There is greater woe for you who reject a greater witness. Look again at [Luke 10:]13: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon. . . ." Stop there. Tyre was a two-part city located off the coast of Israel. There was a rocky shoreline, and on that shoreline Tyre built this incredible, rocky fortress. That was the old city of Tyre—very formidable, very strong. About a half mile off shore, there was an island, and on that island was built the even

bigger, and more extensive city of New Tyre. Tyre had this incredible navy that was unsurpassed. Tyre was extremely wealthy. Tyre was the one who sold to David and Solomon all the wood for the [building of God's] temple [see 2 Chronicles 2:3]. They owned and controlled all the territory in the hills of Lebanon that had all these great forests, and so they grew rich off of that.

They not only had that, but on [the] island, they discovered a certain mollusk, kind of like a clam, that they could make purple dye [from]. They sold this very expensive purple dye, and purple fabric. They had [an] incredible weaving industry. They had a glass industry. They had expert craftsmen and builders. The city was phenomenally rich. It was one of the greatest commercial ports of the whole ancient world. And because they had so much money, and they were so safe behind their fortress walls, they grew proud, and they grew arrogant, and they began to trust in themselves. They increased in every kind of immorality, wickedness, vice, and idolatry. They became the target of God's wrath. In fact, when you read the Old Testament, the strongest pronouncements of judgment, and the most frequent, [were] against Tyre.

I'm going to read one to you. This is just a sample: Ezekiel 26:17–21. Three chapters [of Ezekiel]—26, 27, and 28—are all about Tyre's demise. Listen to what the Lord says:

They will take up a lamentation over you and say to you,  
“How you have perished, O inhabited one, From the seas, O renowned city, Which was mighty on the sea, She and her inhabitants, Who imposed her terror On all her inhabitants! Now the coastlands will tremble On the day of your fall; Yes, the coastlands which are by the sea Will be terrified at your passing.” For thus says the Lord GOD, “When I make you a desolate city, like the cities which are not inhabited, when I bring up the deep over you and the great waters cover you, then I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the peo-

ple of old, and I will make you dwell in the lower parts of the earth, like the ancient waste places, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited; but I will set glory in the land of the living. I will bring terrors on you and you will be no more; though you will be sought, you will never be found again,” declares the Lord GOD.

That’s just a sample, and Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum would have a greater judgment than Tyre.

Tyre was never overthrown by the Egyptians. They couldn’t do it. The Assyrians came up against them, [and] couldn’t conquer them. The Phoenicians came up against them, [and] couldn’t conquer them. Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, came up against them, [and] couldn’t conquer them. God finally sent Alexander the Great, and in 332 BC, when Alexander arrived at Tyre, he saw that they were very snug on their little island, and that they had a very formidable navy. So he said, “Fill in the land between the mainland and the island.” They filled in the Mediterranean. Think about that. Day and night they labored, and for seven months, Tyre saw their doom approaching, because as soon as that land was connected with the island, the foot soldiers would come across. That’s exactly what they did. They broke down the city, they slaughtered everyone in it, they burned it to the ground, and kicked all the stones into the sea. It was never rebuilt again. That was the end of Tyre.

Sidon was about twenty-five miles up the coast from Tyre in what is now Lebanon. Artaxerxes III, who ruled Persia from 358–338 BC, came to Sidon. Sidon decided to rebel against Artaxerxes III, [and] also convinced the Cyprians and the Phoenicians to join with them. Somebody betrayed the city, [however], it was opened up, and Artaxerxes’ armies came in and cut down 40,000 people with the sword, burnt the city to the ground, [and] knocked down its fortifications. They were never again rebuilt. Both of those cities, Tyre and Sidon, are examples of great, strong cities that were

judged by God, and they never had the gospel preached, and nobody ever did miracles in them.

Look at [Luke 10:]13 again. “For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you...” Stop there and notice that little, two-letter word “if.” Jesus’ statement implies that Tyre and Sidon never had somebody preach there, never had anybody do miracles, but Jesus, being God, knows that if they [had], there would have been a different outcome. What would that outcome be? Look at the middle of verse 13: “They would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.” Sackcloth and ashes were a way of [demonstrating] utter humility, brokenness, and repentance. You would put on this coarse, black, goat’s-hair sack, pour ashes on your head, which were dirty and dusty, and you would lament and wail. Do you remember what happened in Nineveh when Jonah came, and said, “Nineveh is going to be overthrown”? They repented in sackcloth and ashes [see Jonah 3:5]. Jesus says, “That’s what Tyre and Sidon would have done, if somebody [had] come and preached to them, but they never had what you’ve had.”

Look at [Luke 10:]14: “But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you.” It’s interesting reading commentaries on this text because the commentators [go] into all this detail, a lot of them, about the ruins of Tyre and Sidon, and not only Tyre and Sidon, but Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, [saying], “[The cities are] just rubble, the cities are broken down, and obviously the judgment came.” [As I was reading], I thought to myself, “Man, they’re missing it. They’ve missed the whole thing.” Jesus doesn’t care about buildings. He’s not talking about the judgment of architecture, roads, and bridges. He’s talking about people! The *people* of those cities would be judged. Chorazin represents a group of people. Bethsaida represents a group of people. Capernaum represents a group of people. Jesus is making a comparison not between the saved and the unsaved, but between the unsaved who are damned to hell, and the unsaved who are damned to a greater hell.

[Third]: Hell will have greater torments for those who commit greater acts of sin. A lot of people have never thought about this. They don't even realize that that's the case. They think, "Well, hell is kind of a universal bad place that you go [to] and [where] you suffer equally." No. There are greater torments in hell. Those torments in hell are proportional to the kinds of sins you commit in this life. I went through the Bible [and] looked up all the texts that talk about comparisons, degrees of punishment, and degrees of judgment for different sins. I listed them all, categorized them, and broke them down into seven different kinds of really bad sins. I'd love to go into this in great detail, but we just have to run through it. Here they are: seven kinds of really bad sins.

[First]: Sins of immorality are greater sins. In the New Testament there are three texts [that] say, "Shall not inherit the kingdom of God." [That] phrase appear[s] after lists of sins. [Those texts are] 1 Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 5:19–21, [and] Ephesians 5:4–5. In every one of those lists, guess what sin is listed first and foremost? Immorality. Why is that? [It is] because immorality is a compound sin. If you commit adultery, you sin against your body, you sin against the other person's body, you sin against your spouse, you sin against their spouse, you cause them to sin against their spouse, and then you both sin against God. That is a compound sin. Even if you're involved in something like pornography, you [may] think, "Well, that's just me," [but] it's not. There's another person on the other end. You are exploiting that person, you are defiling your mind, [and] you are paying that person to do evil—a compound sin. Those who commit those kinds of sin will receive greater judgment.

Second: There is greater judgment on people who sin against greater numbers of people. Think about this. If I am a leader, and I sin, yes, I sin against God, but I [also] sin against all of you because I am your leader. Do you remember the story of Nadab and Abihu? Remember that story? They were the priests [who] were representing the people before God. God says, "Go in there, do these certain things, offer these sacrifices." They went in there, they offered strange fire, [and] God incinerated them. After He

incinerated them, He told Aaron—they were Aaron’s sons—“If you mourn their deaths, I will kill you!” Do you know why He said that? “Because they had failed to treat Me holy before the people, and if you feel sorry for them, I will kill you, too” [see Leviticus 10:1–7].

[If] you sin against people as a leader, that is a greater sin. That’s why 1 Timothy 5:[19–20] [says if] you have an elder who continues in sin, you don’t just do the normal church discipline thing on him, you bring him up in front of the congregation, you rebuke him in the presence of all, [and] you make him confess his sins in the presence of all so that the whole congregation knows [that] he is a leader [who] is not to be followed, he is disqualified, and so that [the congregation] would be fearful of doing the same sin. [There is] severe, severe judgment for leaders who fall into sin.

Third: Being a false teacher is a greater sin. I think this is pretty obvious. The Scriptures talk about those false teachers who not only lead people into doctrines which cause them to have a wicked lifestyle, but worse than that, lead them to hell [by] teaching them works salvation, teaching them [that] Christ isn’t God, teaching them that Jesus didn’t rise from the dead or [by tainting] some other essential doctrine of salvation. [That is] a damning heresy, and they will incur a stricter judgment.

Fourth: Causing a believer to stumble is a greater sin. Jesus said in Matthew 18:5–7 that it would be better—a comparative thing—for you to have a millstone hung around your neck and to be cast into the sea, than to lead another believer into sin. Think about that one. Every mill had this small millstone, and a big millstone, and on that millstone holes [were] drilled [and] poles [were inserted in them]. Animals would turn [the millstone], you’d pour the grain in the top, it would funnel down, and [the stone] would crush the grain into flour. Just imagine what it would be like to be shipped out beyond Catalina Island out there in the Pacific. Somebody puts a big metal shackle on your neck, and a giant, knobby chain bolted to a 400-pound chunk of concrete. [Then] they kick it over the edge. You would instantly be sucked down into the black, ever-compressing, crushing darkness of [the] depths. It would crush the life right out of you and do it fast. If

you've ever dived down even to [the bottom of] an eight-foot[-deep] pool, you [have felt some of that] pressure. If you were being sucked down [into the depths, it] would crush the life right out of you. Jesus says, "That is a good thing. That is to be preferred [to] leading another believer into sin." You think about that when you know a believer, and you say, "Oh, come on. You can do this. Follow me. Engage in this sin. It's OK." It'd be better to do the millstone in the sea than to [lead a believer astray].

Fifth: Hindering others from entering into heaven is a greater sin. This is not talking about false doctrine, but [about] people [who] forbid Bible reading, [or who] have opposed Christianity, have opposed the truth, have opposed the Bible, have opposed good preaching. Professing Christians have sat in church and told preachers, "We don't want you preaching the gospel to us." Parents have told their children, "We don't want you going to church." Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 2:15–16, speaking of these [people] who hinder others from being saved, says these chilling words:

They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

It's one bad thing to reject Jesus, but if you try to hinder other people from heaven, wrath will come upon you "to the utmost," Paul says.

Sixth: Sins against others are greater than sins against self. [The people of] Israel, during the time of Malachi, were doing the religious thing. Everybody was living in sin, but they were going through the motions, offering the sacrifices, doing all that stuff. You know the text—Micah 6:8—where God, speaking through Malachi says, "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?" See, they were sinning against each other because they were not practicing justice toward one another. They were not being kind to one another. They were not being

humble to one another. [These are] sins against others. Jesus talks about the same thing in Luke 20:46–47. Jesus warns:

Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.

Why? [It is] because they're leaders, and they're practicing hypocritical worship. By their actions [they] are hindering and sinning against others.

Seventh and finally: Sins committed against greater knowledge are greater sins. Jesus says in Luke 12:47–48: “And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes.” [If] you're a slave, and you know what your master wants you to do and you don't do it, you are going to receive many lashes. What about the slave who doesn't [know his master's will]? What about the slave who says, “I didn't know. Nobody told me!”? [Jesus says], “But the one who did not know it,” that is, his master's will, “and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few.” Do you see that? It doesn't matter whether you know [it] or not: if you violate God's Word, you get punished for it, but there is a difference in degree because the more knowledge you have, the greater the punishment.

Jesus then finishes: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.” The author of Hebrews, in Hebrews 6:4–6, as he's speaking about these people who have heard the gospel, have experienced fellowship in the church, and all the things that were happening in that first century among the believers, says, “Those people who have all that revelation, and walk away from it,” he says, “it is impossible again to renew them to repentance.” Later on, in chapter 10, he says, “Those who are in the fellowship, who turn their back on God, they crucify to themselves the Son of God,

they put Him to open shame. There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins for those people.” He says, “The only thing they can look forward to is the terrifying expectation of judgment, and *the fury of the fire which will consume the adversary*” [see Hebrews 10:26–31]. That’s all. That’s all they have to look forward to and nothing else but that. Why? [It is] because they had knowledge and they rejected it.

My question to you is this: Why will some of you not turn to the Lord? I know some of you don’t know Christ. I know some of you come here Sunday after Sunday, and you won’t turn to Christ. Maybe you’ve got your little sins that you want, and they’re giving you a little pleasure, or they’re giving you a little gain, and you know they are. Are they really worth it? Are they worth an *eternity* of suffering? Do you think that some other day you will be able to just give your life to Christ just as you go off the edge of the waterfall? You may die [in a car accident with] a drunk driver. You may drop dead of a brain aneurysm. You don’t know how long you will live. Your life is a vapor [see James 4:14]. You’ll be like the rich man who said, “Oh, I have stored up all these things. I’m going to eat [and] drink,” and that night his soul was required of him [see Luke 12:16–21].

“Oh, but,” says one, “I don’t reject Christ. I’m not rejecting His mercy. I’m not rejecting His grace. I believe in Jesus. I’m just not ready to leave my sins.” Poor, blind soul! You know nothing of Jesus’ grace! You know nothing of His mercy, and His love, and His forgiveness, because if you did, you would know that those things are extended to people to push them *away* from sin, not toward it. To reject God after being in church, after hearing the gospel, after owning a Bible, I can’t imagine how severe a punishment you will deserve. It will be more tolerable in the day of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum than for you.

Know that if you reject the message of God’s messenger, you reject God Himself. I am sure some on judgment day will argue that Jesus has made a mistake. “Oh, you can’t judge me! I want you to know, I had good intentions. There were so many religions in the world, how did I know that Christianity was true? I was waiting to accept Christ until after I had my

fill of sin. There were so many translations and transliterations of the Bible, how did I know what was true? What about the natives in Africa?”

Do you think Jesus will say, “Oh, well, no problem”? So many people claim to be Christians, and so many of them are hypocrites. I have news for you: they’re all hypocrites.

“I knew Christians who fell into sin, [and] who were mean to me. I saw churches split and heard of churches that split. I knew pastors who fell into sin.”

Jesus is going to say, “So, because they sinned, you sinned?”

Look at [Luke 10:]16. Jesus now connects the dots to this kind of reasoning. Look at the text: “The one who listens to you listens to Me.” Stop there and just think about that. If you hear the Word of God, if you hear the gospel message, I don’t care if it’s from a preacher, from a friend, the radio, the Internet, a tract, the Bible, I don’t care what it is. [If] you hear the truth of God, you hear Jesus speak to you. Jesus is the Word of God incarnate, made flesh. When the Word of God speaks, Jesus speaks. [If] you reject the Word of God, you reject Jesus; you reject your own Savior. Jesus continues in verse 16, look there in the middle: “And the one who rejects you rejects Me.” The opposite is also true. [If] you receive Jesus, you receive Jesus’ words. They go together. You can’t receive Jesus’ words and not receive Jesus, and you can’t receive Jesus without receiving His words. If you reject His words, you reject Jesus.

Jesus concludes: “And he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.” You can’t accept God and reject Jesus. You can’t accept Christ and reject His Word. They come together—it’s a package. Here it is unmistakably clear that men will be responsible for their unbelief and hardness of heart. They will be responsible for their own sin and their own hardness of heart. You can’t blame God. You can’t blame Satan. You can’t blame your hypocritical parents or other hypocritical Christians. It’s your fault and your fault alone. Your unbelief is your own, your sin is your own, and you will pay the debt for it if you don’t have a substitute. For those of you who do not know Christ, who have heard the gospel many times, who come to church

regularly and have not repented, there is only one warning for you: Woe, great woe.

[If] you leave this service today unrepentant, you may never come back. God may take you home. You may be like the man who thought he was going to live for a long time, and that night, the Lord took him home [see Luke 12:16–21]. The mercy of God is extended for you right now. [If] you leave here, God’s judgment will rest over your head like a razor-sharp, double-edged sword. It will be hanging there and it is mercy that is that thread, and that thread can be cut at any moment, because mercy is undeserved, it is unearned, and you don’t deserve to have it. Every moment that you have breathed from the time of your birth until now, that thread has been there, but there is no guarantee that it is going to remain. God in a million ways could cut it. [Do] you know what would happen? To Hades you would be cast down! Then there you would be, and I’m telling you, you wouldn’t be partying with your friends in hell. You wouldn’t be having fun with your friends in hell. You wouldn’t be there being your own god, doing your own thing, enjoying your own sins with a harem of women.

You would be in outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth [see Matthew 9:12, 22:13, 25:30], isolated, alone, separate from God, preparing for [an] eternity of torment. [You will be] tormented like the rich man in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, who cried out, [asking] that God would just send somebody to put one drop of water on his tongue, for he was in agony in those flames [see Luke 16:19–25]. Did he receive any? No. No more mercy. No more mercy would you ever receive until one moment you’ll receive a little bit of mercy, when all of a sudden God gives you a new body, and fierce angels escort you to the Great White Throne Judgment of God [see Revelation 20:11]. There you will stand before Jesus to be judged. Because you did not repent of your sins, you did not believe in Him, you will be judged.

After you hear those crushing words, “Depart from me, you worker of iniquity” [see Luke 13:27], [angels] will carry you over that lake of fire [see Revelation 20:15], which is, I don’t know [what it is], but it’s bad,

and all the heat is coming up, and those angels have your arms, and they'll take you into the middle, and they'll let you go. In you will go, and that's where you'll stay. Why? [It is] because you wouldn't heed the warning. You wouldn't accept grace. You wouldn't believe the gospel to be saved.

I'm telling you, your blood is not going to be on my head. I preach the gospel *every single Sunday*. I don't care if you're here for the first time or if you've been here for twenty years, your blood's not on my head. Christ died for you on the cross, He bore your sins, He was buried and rose again on the third day. If you repent and believe, you will be saved. Those, people, are Jesus' words, and I'm just telling you as His messenger. Come to Christ. Come to Christ today. Do not put it off. Do not think tomorrow will come. You will be in that place where "the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched" [see Mark 9:44, 46, 48], if you harden your heart and die in your sins. I beg you by the mercies of God to heed the warning.

Let's say you're a believer. This obviously isn't the cheery sermon that we might want to hear, but it's necessary because texts like this motivate us to be very thankful and uncomplaining. Realize that you are no better than anyone else, you don't deserve great grace, or even a little grace, or even a little mercy. God did not save you because you were special and more righteous than other people. He didn't save you because [He thought], "Compared to all those sinners, you were obviously the better of the batch. I mean, they were all rotten, but you were less rotten." No, you were rotten. As a matter of fact, God likes to save extra-rotten eggs just because it's a greater demonstration of His grace. That's who you are, that's who I am: extra-rotten eggs saved by grace by the mere pleasure of God. "It does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy" [Romans 9:16]. He chooses us because of His own will, and His own grace, and He saves us freely. And that, people, should make you thankful—ever thankful. I don't care what's happened in your life, that [should] make you thankful.

It should also motivate you, shouldn't it? It should motivate you to share the gospel with those who don't know Jesus, to talk to them about Christ.

Just do it. Just open your mouth. Death, burial, and resurrection—get it out of there. Forget the program, forget the Romans Road, just tell them. If they reject [it], then that's between them and God, but you do your part. Tell them about Jesus.

Finally, as you look at God's grace extended to you, [you need to] not only be thankful, [but] you [also] need to be praising Him. Praise Him because He has saved you though you are unworthy. Humble yourself, submit to Christ, and give Him glory, for He is a *great* Savior. Let's pray.

Father, I just thank You for this text. Father, I know You put these passages in Your Word that we might be brought [face]-to-face with reality. Father, I pray for those right now who may be hardening their hearts, who may be offering excuses for their sin, but who know within [that] they do not love Christ, they are not following You, they do not want to submit to Your Word, or have Christ reigning over them. Father, I pray that You would bring terror upon their hearts, make them fear judgment, make them drawn to Your love. Help them to see Christ as a Savior, a Rock, a Refuge, for His mercy is extended today and there's no guarantee it will be extended tomorrow. And, Father, for the rest of us, may we be thankful, may we be sharing the gospel, may we be praising You, for You are a great God who saves unworthy sinners by Your grace. We thank You for that. In Christ's name, Amen.