

THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

August 7, 2016

15. Woe on Unrepentant Towns

Matthew 11:20-24

Unrepentance is an awful, terrible sin and the gravity of its punishment is quite heavy as it prevents one from entering the kingdom God and throws one straight into hell. The sin of unrepentance is equivalent to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which is never forgiven. This is because when you fail to repent, you are denying the convictions of the Holy Spirit. Each time the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, righteousness and judgment and you fail to repent, it will be more tolerable or bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you on that dreadful Day of Judgment. Each time the word of God is preached and you are convicted, yet you pay no attention to take steps towards the kingdom of heaven and repent, there will be no mercy left for you on the Day of Judgment. Each time you deliberately sin after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there remains no remission for your sin and it will be terrible for you on the Day of Judgment. So you either enter the kingdom of God now or you will perish with the ungodly. John the Baptist came and preached with urgency – Repent for the kingdom of God is near. Jesus followed with the same urgency saying, repent for the Kingdom of God is here. The miracle of the second birth ushers you into the kingdom of God. This second birth comes through repentance as you are born of the water and the spirit. Certain cities witnessed the miracles that Jesus did, especially the miracle of spiritual birth yet they failed to repent. As such Jesus denounced those cities and pronounced woe on each of them.

Thus our text of the day reads, “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. [That is, the realm of the dead]. 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” (Matthew 11:20-24).

In this discourse, Matthew presents the judgment Jesus pronounced on three unrepentant cities: Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. Chorazin and Bethsaida were small towns just north of the Sea of Galilee and the town of Capernaum. Jesus had performed powerful signs in those towns, but they refused to believe in His ministry and messiahship. If the miracles performed in these two cities had been performed in the Gentile towns of Tyre and Sidon, the Gentiles would have believed in Jesus’ ministry and messiahship. Therefore, because a great revelation had been made to these places, a greater accountability would be levied against them. As such Jesus pronounced judgment on both Chorazin and Bethsaida. Then Jesus pronounced a judgment of greater magnitude on Capernaum worse than on Sodom, the Old Testament city with a reputation for great sinfulness. Genesis 18-19 records that God’s judgment of fire destroyed the city of Sodom, where not even ten righteous men could be found.

How does this message from Matthew 11:20-24 apply to us today? The Bible repeatedly warns of the judgment that awaits sinners. That judgment is based on our individual refusal to repent of

sin as defined by God's moral standards. We are aware of His standards both from an innate knowledge of right and wrong and from the Scriptures. Therefore, we bear our guilt before God. Our conscience bears witness to this and, being aware of our violation of God's Law, we are culpable for our transgressions. Paul wrote to the Roman Christians about this reality. In Romans 2:12-15 he says, "For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing them witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them).

While all unrepentant sinners will be sentenced to eternal hell, those who have heard the Word of God and still reject it will receive a greater judgment. The more truth that one is exposed to determines the level of accountability to the Creator and, therefore, the degree of judgment both now and for eternity. The writer of Hebrews informs us of the consequences of deliberate rejection of the truth when he writes: "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:26-31). In a sense, there is great danger in hearing the Word of God; for if you hear the word of God and refuse it, it only increases your guilt. It is only when we respond to it with repentance and faith in God's gracious forgiveness through Christ that we can avoid impending judgment.

Many people have rejected and do reject the light of God's truth. The full revelation of that truth was seen in Jesus Christ and is now recorded in its entirety in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures. All who sit under its preaching have the light of truth shined on their life. And unless they respond with repentance to the message of Christ, they would be definitely judged and sent to hell based on the extent of their rejection of Him. While the Word of God brings light and life to those who respond to Jesus Christ in faith, it is also the basis of judgment for those who reject Him. John 3:16-21 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God". Therefore, it is a damning thing to sit in church or in a Jewish synagogue week after week pretending to be religious. It is dangerous to read the Bible and neglect its clear message in favor of your own personal theology. Actually, you continually heap guilt on yourself when you read the Word of God or hear it communicated plainly and yet turn a deaf ear to it. This is also true when you see testimony of a godly life in a true believer and write it off as fanaticism. It is true that pagan ungodliness is

**terrible, but religious hypocrisy is the worst.**

**It is very certain that there will be varying degrees of punishment in hell as this passage and others indicate. For instance Luke 12:47-48 says, "The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked". But everyone who suffers eternal punishment will suffer because they did not respond to the light of God's truth with repentance. Unbelief sends you to hell and determines your eternal punishment.**

**Have you repented of your sins? Have you turned away from sin in repentance and to Jesus Christ to receive forgiveness? He died on the cross to experience death for you and was raised from the dead. Jesus suffered the fullness of God's wrath -- the wrath of God toward unbelieving sinners. If you look to Him for salvation, you will have eternal life. Like those first century Jews, you may see yourself as a respectable, moral, religious person, but you are not the judge -- God is. You must be measured against His holy standard, and He says that all have sinned and fallen short of His glory and deserve eternal death (Rom. 3:23). Your opinion does not matter. Only God provides salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Each time that you reject this truth, you bring an even greater degree of judgment on yourself. So if you have not received Christ, please do so today!**

**Mt Traveler members, as we conclude today, the following are some main points to remember: The early Ministry of Jesus around the Sea of Galilee after the Sermon on the Mount reflected the following:**

- The Healing of a Leper – a miracle occurring and the process involves request, response, resolution, and restriction and/or responsibility.**
- The Healings at Capernaum – Showing Christ is interested in our complete deliverance - sin, sickness and death so that we can serve Him and others.**
- There is a price tag in following Jesus that you cannot afford to be impulsive or reluctant but dedicated in your commitment to follow Jesus.**
- The storms are calmed at the word of His command and peace is restored!**
- Two demon-possessed men were restored!**
- The forgiving and healing of a paralytic man**
- The call of Matthew, the disciple**
- Jesus questioned about fasting**
- The raising of Jairus daughter and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood.**
- The healing of the blind and the mute to reflect how faith affects our sight and speech.**
- The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few**
- How He commissioned the disciples and sent the apostles on a mission**
- How He sent them as sheep among wolves.**
- The pronouncement of Judgment on the Unrepentant cities and the unrepentant**
- And let the church say, "Amen!"**

**Do you know this Jesus who transforms you through cleansing and/or healing to be accepted by the society of believers? If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from**

**your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God's family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God's kingdom as you practice the Beatitudes. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!**

**If you are reading this on the Internet why don't you pray asking Jesus Christ to be your Lord and savior, then write us at [pastordatiri@mttraveler.org](mailto:pastordatiri@mttraveler.org)? If you are a child of God and this message has blessed or helped to you, please write and tell us also.**

**Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama  
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor**

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**THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST**

**August 14, 2016**

**16. The Father Revealed in the Son**

**Matthew 11:25-30**

**Do you ever get tired and weary of doing something over and over that is not profitable? Are you tired of sinning that you have become restless? Then learn from children and in faith turn around and run into the open arms of your Heavenly Father to get peace and blissful rest. It is incredible to hear Jesus thank God for hiding these things about His kingdom from the wise and learned, and revealing them to little children. Children are full of faith and scarcely doubt anything concerning the kingdom of God. Children, if taught properly, can easily accept responsibilities for their actions and if necessary they easily repent for evil. This is why Jesus will say in several places in the scriptures that the kingdom belongs to those who are like little children. For instance: Luke 18:17, "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." Matthew 18:3 And Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Mark 10:13-16 says, "And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them"". This is because children are humble, vulnerable and powerless and rely solely on divine providence of God by faith. And of course the main criteria to enter the kingdom of God are repentance, and complete faith in Christ and His finished work of salvation. This because God, the Father has been revealed in the Son, Jesus Christ. And no one can come to Father in His kingdom except through the Son.**

**Thus our text of the day reads, "At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. 27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:25-30).**

In this discourse, Matthew exhibits his rabbinic skill. The literally form of this text is in the genre of a Jewish revelation text comprising of the following three sections: Thanksgiving to God for the revelation from the Father (vv. 25-26); The revelation itself (v. 27); and An invitation arising from the revelation (vv. 28-30).

### **1. Thanksgiving to God for the revelation from the Father(vv. 25-26)**

In this section, Jesus prayed an unusual prayer in Matthew 11:25-26. After the cities of Korazin and Bethsaida, and Capernaum had ignored Him and rejected Him, He prayed "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do". Here we see Jesus is thanking God for revealing the kingdom message. However, this revelation had been hidden from the wise and learned but revealed to the babes or little children. The wise and learned here referred to the Jewish Religious leaders (Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes, and Zealots) whereas the babes or children referred to the disciples. Briefly, the Pharisees were a political, religious reformers, separatists, and social group. They resisted Hellenization (adoption of Greek culture) as opposed to the Sadducees who were more conforming. Pharisees had a political messianic inclination but possessed little political power. They strictly observed the Mosaic Law and interpreted the Torah in a broader sense than the Sadducees, including the remainder of the Jewish cannon as well as the vast rabbinic tradition in their legal code. They also believe in the judgment of the Gentiles, the resurrection of the dead and angels.

The Scribes were primarily secretaries responsible for recording both the religious and legal aspects of Jewish life. Most of them sympathized with the Pharisees and some were even members of the Pharisees (Mark 2:16). Therefore they were the scholars of the Law upon whom the Pharisees depended for their interpretation of the Law. They were not so much of a sect as a social or scholarly group.

The Sadducees sometimes acted as a sect but at other times as a political movement, consisting mostly of the sociologically upper class and wealthy members of the society with greater political influence than the Pharisees. However, they were often in religious conflict with the Pharisees as they only believe the Torah (the books of Moses) to be the inspired Scriptures and adopted a free mind-set in regard to life, but rejected personal immortality, the resurrection and the presence of angels.

The Herodians are not popular and are mentioned only three times in the Gospels (Matthew 22:16, Mark 3:6, and Mark 12:13). They formed a political royalist group in support of the Herodian family and aligned themselves with the Pharisees only in opposition to Jesus, especially to any kingdom He might inaugurate, otherwise these groups never associate with each other.

The Essenes held to the Mosaic Law and interpreted it literally. They also held to a form of afterlife. Some were monastic and some were not but they opposed the temple sacrificial system, believing that mainstream Judaism was corrupt. The remains of animal bones carefully buried in their communities indicate some possibility of animal sacrifices apart from the temple. A strict code and ceremony of admission into the group was followed with a strong code of communal living. It is believed they adopted orphans from the mainstream of Jewish life. Most scholars attribute the production of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Essenes who lived at Qumran near the Dead Sea.

The Zealots took pride in past heroes who had stood adamantly for God and the Law at all odds. The term zealot is derived from the concept of “zeal for God and the Law” and so they stood against any form of idolatry and offenses against the Law. Later they became revolutionaries against opposing overlords, especially against Roman imperialism, although they were not the only revolutionary group during the Roman period of reign. This group was a coalition of a lower group of priests, Jerusalem insurgents, and refugee bandit groups and their zeal during the time of Christ was to overthrow Rome but Jesus did not fit their ideal of a revolutionary king. Very little is known about the Zealots in the Gospel other than Simon the Zealot, one of the apostles, who was a member or former member of the group (Luke 6:15).

Jesus says that only the childlike not the childish can understand spiritual things because He reveals such to them. I must admit it is sometimes difficult distinguishing between childlikeness and childishness, but I do recognize God as my Father and I know that I am in His family.

## **2. The revelation itself (v. 27)**

In this section Matthew reported the revelation itself: “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him” (v.27). The revelation itself has two parts: First, All things or everything that had been given to Jesus related to the kingdom message regarding Jesus, the Messiah. Secondly, it is the Son who revealed the will and plan of God, the Father, regarding the kingdom. The possibility why these religious leaders rejected the Messiahship of Jesus and the kingdom message is because they were blind. This was not a physical blindness but a spiritual blindness that these Jewish religious leaders had and the which we do experience in our generation. They were blind due to their indifference to his miracles and message, his will and purposes in their life as well as blind to a relationship with God because of “self-sufficient attitudes”. Paul would described it in 2 Corinthians 3:14 as “the people’s minds were hardened,” it is like a veil over their thinking “so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ.” Ephesians 4:18 describes it as having their “understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God”. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says that it is Satan who “has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the good news. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:14 puts it this way “but people who aren’t spiritual can’t receive these truths from God’s spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can’t understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the spirit means.” Then Jesus made it clear that the only way to understand God is through him. He says “no one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27) . Now that’s authority! Jesus stands as the only mediator between me and God. (1Timothy 2:5). Jesus does the choosing and he has chosen to reveal the Father only to those who believe and come under his authority (the babes – His apostles or followers).

## **3. An invitation arising from the revelation (vv. 28-30)**

In this section, Matthew reported the invitation of Jesus to all who are weary and heavy laden so they can receive rest or the peace that passes all understanding. His invitation is “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (vv. 28-30). This invitation is an invitation to become a disciple of Jesus. It promises rest (or peace) to the poor and heavy-laden. It is an invitation

about the nature of the kingdom of God and it promises to make the disciples' burden of sin and suffering light through the glorious kingdom message of redemption. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the father except through me. Acts 4:12 says "there is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." Therefore, the only access I have to truth is to come to Him and the key is faith not intelligence. It is childlike faith, not genius. It is not being self sufficient but humble enough to depend upon Him. There is nothing wrong with intelligence because I need a brain to think through these things but knowing God is not dependent upon intelligence. It demands coming under the authority of Jesus Christ. I love the way 1 Corinthians 1:25-29 (NIV) puts it "For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord"

God bless you church today as you exercise the foolishness of believing in Christ and coming under his authority for your life, without the encumbrance of your genius. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus' invitation says "come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Have you accepted this invitation that comes through the kingdom message of the Messiah to repent of your sins? Have you turned away from sin in repentance and to Jesus Christ to receive forgiveness? He died on the cross to experience death for you and was raised from the dead. Jesus suffered the fullness of God's wrath -- the wrath of God toward unbelieving sinners. If you look to Him for salvation, you will have eternal life. Like those first century Jews, you may see yourself as a respectable, moral, religious person, but you are not the judge -- God is. You must be measured against His holy standard, and He says that all have sinned and fallen short of His glory and deserve eternal death (Rom. 3:23). Your opinion does not matter. Only God provides salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Each time that you reject this truth, you bring an even greater degree of judgment on yourself. So if you have not received Christ, please do so today!

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**Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama**  
**Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor**

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**THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST**

**August 21, 2016**

**17. Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath**

**Matthew 12:1-14**

On this Homecoming Sunday I want you to be aware that in this generation, where people are looking for anything to soothe their itchy ears, if you are truthful and faithfully in proclaiming the kingdom message you will be hated for no other reason. Often, the people that dislike you and the kingdom message you are spreading will always form alliances and set traps to find faults with you. It was no different for the people who rejected Jesus, the Messiah and the kingdom message He was proclaiming. Those religious leaders, who thought they were wise and learned, and rejected Jesus and His message of the kingdom formed alliances to oppose Him. They also set traps to find faults with Him. However, Jesus always sought the loss and the sinners who were receptive and responsive to the kingdom message that demands repentance to enter into the kingdom of God is already here. Jesus also makes provision for the needs of His followers all the time. So on this Homecoming Sunday, Jesus has His arms open to receive and forgive those that are receptive and responsive to His the kingdom message. That’s why on last Sunday’s message Jesus had an invitation for all those who were weary and heavy laden to come unto Him and He will give them rest. The Jewish people, especially those Jewish leaders (Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes, and Zealots) understood this concept of resting on the Sabbath day after working for six days. On the Sabbath no work was done. If you would, please recall that we also said on last Sunday that the Pharisees strictly observed the



Mosaic Law and interpreted the Torah in a broader sense than the Sadducees, including the remainder of the Jewish canon as well as the vast rabbinic tradition in their legal code.

Thus our text of the day reads, “At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. 2 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.” 3 He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. 5 Or haven’t you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? 6 I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. 7 If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ [Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:8] you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” 9 Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, 10 and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” 11 He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” 13 Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus” (Matthew 12:1-14).

In this discourse, Matthew records some of the encounters indicating the building controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, particularly the Scribes and the Pharisees. It was on the Sabbath that Jesus and his disciples were traveling through the grain fields and being hungry, they plucked some grain and ate. The Pharisees saw this as a serious violation of the Sabbath Law concerning resting from all work on the seventh day as recorded in Exodus 20:10; 34:21 and Deuteronomy 5:14. In the Pharisees legalistic system, the rabbinic tradition listed at least 39 classes of work the rabbis saw covered by this law. Their overzealous literal application of the legal principle definitely overlooked a deeper principle to which Jesus held the Pharisees. Thus Jesus corrected their understanding by referring them to two examples in the Jewish writings (Torah), which were the exceptions to the legal application of the Law. He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was unlawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven’t you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent?” Furthermore, Jesus finally explains the place of the Law in God’s purpose. Jesus’ opening statement, “Have you not read...” was somewhat a rebuke or reminder to the Pharisees of what they should have known about David and his men eating bread of the Presence in the Tabernacle that was only reserved for the priest (2 Samuel 21:1-6; Leviticus 24:5-9). When this happened, the priest did not condemn David and his men, and in Jesus thinking this was not sin. The next argument that Jesus presented was that the priest broke the literal interpretation of the Sabbath Law every Sabbath when they served in the temple, yet the Pharisees took no offense at such. So there was no need for the Pharisees to take the Sabbath Law legalistically.

The next statement that Jesus made raises the question: What does He mean by one who was greater? Jesus probably meant the new system of grace had come to replace the legal system of the Law since He referred to the principle often brought up in the Torah, especially in Hosea 6:6 and Micah 6:8, “God desires mercy rather than sacrifice”. Jesus then remarked, the Son of Man

**is Lord of the Sabbath. In fact the Gospel of Mark (Mark 2:27) records this saying of Jesus more fully to include the concept that the Sabbath was made for mankind, not mankind for the Sabbath. In this way Jesus was setting the Torah in a more mature content or context than the Pharisees did.**

**The Pharisees did not like Jesus' rebuff and so they showed up in the synagogue and set up a trap to find fault with Jesus. When a man with a withered hand appeared, the Pharisees raised the question about whether it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath to accuse Jesus regarding lawful activity on the Sabbath. In this instance, Jesus knew the rabbinic practice of rescuing animals on the Sabbath (Luke 14:5) and so He argued that it is far more important to heal a person on the Sabbath than rescue an animal. So He healed the man and completely restored his withered hand. The Pharisees got frenzied and took council on how to destroy Jesus as they plotted to kill Him.**

**The take home message is understand that every law in the scripture is not literal and legalistic because the law is made for man, not man for the law. We now live in the dispensation of grace; therefore God desires mercy than sacrifices. For by grace you have been saved through faith! And so Jesus healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath proofing He is the Lord of the Sabbath.**

**Mt Traveler members, as we conclude today, the following are some main points to remember: The early Ministry of Jesus around the Sea of Galilee after the Sermon on the Mount reflected the following:**

- The Healing of a Leper – a miracle occurring and the process involves request, response, resolution, and restriction and/or responsibility.**
- The Healings at Capernaum – Showing Christ is interested in our complete deliverance - sin, sickness and death so that we can serve Him and others.**
- There is a price tag in following Jesus that you cannot afford to be impulsive or reluctant but dedicated in your commitment to follow Jesus.**
- The storms are calmed at the word of His command and peace is restored!**
- Two demon-possessed men were restored!**
- The forgiving and healing of a paralytic man**
- The call of Matthew, the disciple**
- Jesus questioned about fasting**
- The raising of Jairus daughter and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood.**
- The healing of the blind and the mute to reflect how faith affects our sight and speech.**
- The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few**
- How He commissioned the disciples and sent the apostles on a mission**
- How He sent them as sheep among wolves.**
- The pronouncement of Judgment on the Unrepentant cities and the unrepentant**
- The Father Revealed in the Son**
- Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath!**
- And let the church say, "Amen!"**

**Do you know this Jesus who transforms you through cleansing and/or healing to be accepted by the society of believers? If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from**

**your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God's family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God's kingdom as you practice the Beatitudes. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!**

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**Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama  
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor**

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**THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST**

**August 28, 2016**

**18. God's Chosen Servant**

**Matthew 12:15-21**

**God's chosen servant knows that he has a charge to keep and a calling to fulfill. As such every God's chosen servant has been ordained to the carry out his ministry responsibly. Hence as servants of God who proclaim the kingdom message, you must be aware of your surroundings because not everyone will be supportive of your ministry. When Jesus sensed the religious leaders of His days were plotting to kill Him for fulfilling His ordained mission of executing justice through knowledge of the purpose of the law (and not merely its legalistic aspect) thereby providing liberty to the crowd, He was not naïve concerning these threats but immediately took precautions. He did not plan evil back for the religious leaders; rather he withdrew from the place where there were threats. However, He continued with His ministry to the large crowd that followed Him – meeting their needs. He healed all who were ill but cautioned and seriously warned the same (crowd) not to tell others about Him for He was not out for a popularity contest! Many ministers in this generation think that as a servant of God they must be popular and unfortunate many Christians encourage ministers to seek popularity by stroking their egos. Jesus did not desire popularity; rather He focused on fulfilling what was spoken about Him in the Scripture. And church, we must understand that there are things that God has ordained for us as His servants to fulfill. Therefore we must be aware and not be naïve about our Christian responsibilities to allow anybody to deter us from fulfilling our God ordained ministry by inciting us to become arrogant. So we must always remain humble and focus because we have a charge to keep and a calling to fulfill. This is how we can give hope to the nations as we proclaim Jesus and the kingdom message.**

**Thus our text of the day reads, "Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. 16 He warned them not to tell others about him. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. 19 He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. 21 In his name the nations will put their hope" [Isaiah 42:1-4]" (Matthew 12:15-21).**

**In this discourse, Matthew records that Jesus withdrew from the synagogue when He became**

aware that the Pharisees were plotting to kill Him. Rather than incite the Pharisees further, Jesus sought out quieter environs away from places that the Pharisees frequented, but continued His healing ministry. Matthew records that “Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. He warned them not to tell others about him” (Matthew 12:15-16). Herein we see or can infer from Jesus’ actions that for servants of God to be effective in their God ordained ministry, they must avoid confrontational environments but seek opportunities to fulfill their responsibilities to continue to minister. This is because retaliation towards those who dislike or oppose your God ordained ministry never augments or promote your ministry. Paul instructed Timothy his son in the ministry to avoid ungodly controversies because they lead to more ungodliness. The lesson here is that you must keep doing what is right so as to keep the charge God has given you and fulfill your calling without seeking to be popular. Always remember that in the flesh, not everyone will readily accept the kingdom message. Therefore you must seek the receptive and responsive audience.

Next, Matthew draws our attention to one of the Servant Songs in Isaiah 42:1-4 to demonstrate that Jesus, as the Messiah, was engaged in fulfilling messianic works with the ultimate aim of giving hope to the nations. Verses 17-21 of today’s text read, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope”. Herein we see that a servant of God is always chosen by God because God loves and delights in him to put His Spirit on him for the purpose of proclaiming justice to the nations. So God’s servant will not quarrel or even engage with the street courts. The street courts are where people are judged through gossips, hearsays and falsehood. The servant of God must not engage in the street courts because these break those already hurting (“a bruised reed he will not break”) and discourage those struggling (“a smoldering wick he will not snuff out”). The servant of God must encourage people till he has brought justice through to victory. In this way the servant of God will bring hope to the nations. Jesus did this as an example for his followers and we must follow in His steps. And let the Church say, “Amen”.

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