

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

spectability prevents the definite daring necessary to get into God's Kingdom. We are prone to drift upon easy seas, to admire the visions of the beautiful land, consent to the beauties of the great ideal, and never enter in because we will not . . . consent to yield to the claim of the King. . . ."

3. "Let this be the hour when you have done with your dilettante fooling with sacred things. Let this be the night when you translate your sickly anemic imagination into grip, force, go and determination."

(The above outline and some of its points were suggested by G. C. Morgan's sermon "The Kingdom By Violence" in *26 Sermons by Dr. G. Campbell Morgan*, Vol. II, p. 229ff.)

Another outline of this chapter might be:

"JESUS JUDGES HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND HIMSELF"

- I. John the Baptist (11:2-15): "More than a prophet!"
- II. His people in general (11:16-19): "Like children!"
- III. The most favored cities (11:20-24): "Damned!"
- IV. The simple disciples (11:25-30): "Learned!"
- V. Himself (11:20-30): "The Unique Hope of the Race!"

EXPOSITORY SERMON CHAPTER ELEVEN

"REST IN A RESTLESS WORLD" (11:20-30)

Introduction: The newspapers of the world report riots that picture the great unrest of our world. In the great cities of the world every day is heard news of strikes, riots, protest movements, wars and famines. We wonder where this will all lead to or when it will end. Men's hearts faint for the fear and anxiety over the things that are coming over the world. And why should that be?

There is NO REST IN OUR RESTLESS WORLD, BECAUSE THERE IS NO CERTAINTY.

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1. One woman is uncertain, because another woman could take her husband away from her, and she is not sure that he would not like to go with the other woman!
2. The student is not sure that he can pass his exams, in order to find a small place in our society.
3. The worker can not be sure that tomorrow a machine will not take away his position and work for him.
4. The big industrialist can not be sure that he can hold his wealth.
5. The politicians can only try to establish a better government, but they can never be sure of the outcome.

In whatever other area we can discuss, there exists no rest-bringing security. We can certainly say that the one thing in our world that is certain, is our UNCERTAINTY! And our uncertainty troubles us!

But over the centuries we hear a mighty voice that says: "Come to me! I will give you rest!" In our dark world full of care and strife, difficulties and problems, anxieties and fear, these words bring us comfort, inspiration, encouragement and rest.

Let us listen to this voice from a bit closer by. What does Jesus mean to say to us?

I JESUS CONDEMNS THE UNBELIEVING BECAUSE THEY DID NOT REPENT (11:20-24)

- A. Even though Jesus had fulfilled His commission in this world, yet His own people did not accept Him: they did not repent!
 1. Even though He had done His greatest miracles in their presence, miracles that established His message as God's personal revelation:
 2. Even though He had revealed God's will to them, yet they did not repent.
- B. There was no one more joyfully seen, heard and received than Jesus of Nazareth!
 1. They were all ready to make Him their King and establish a worldly messianic kingdom.
 2. They were willing to risk everything to follow Him, rising up against the Roman government, against the hypocritical religion of the Pharisees and chief priests, against all political authority.
 3. They wanted to have a King who could give them bread,

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miracles and wealth, a place among the greatest empires of the world!

4. They wanted the SECURITY, that could come through His miraculous power. They wanted His providence and protection, His conquest of all enemies and His divine defence. They wanted to have all this, while THEY REMAINED UNCHANGED IN HEART AND LIFE.

C. But Jesus sees that they have not understood Him:

1. He had called them to repentance; they wanted to make Him their servant.
2. He wanted to put God in them; they wanted Him and God in THEIR service.
3. Jesus' heart is broken over their deep need of repentance and over their unwillingness to repent.
4. Jesus has so strenuously, so faithfully, so unselfishly, so carefully tried to give them God! And they have neither seen it nor understood!

D. Is this not a picture of our world?

1. We want God on OUR conditions: all His blessings, all His goodness, but He does not dare demand our repentance nor our obedience!
2. Jesus wants to bring us to reality and truth; He wants to create God in us; He wants to put real rest and peace in our heart, but UNDER HIS CONDITIONS: "I tell you, unless you all likewise repent, you shall all likewise perish!"
3. But to whom did Jesus say that?
 - a. To people that thought that simply to be in the vicinity of Jesus was the same thing as faith and repentance.
 - b. To people who thought that common goodness was the same as deep-felt repentance:
 - (1) These were more or less better people than those of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon.
 - (2) But Jesus did not want to make people *more or less* good, but just as perfect as God Himself! (Mt. 5:48)
 - c. To people who thought that culture and enlightenment were sufficient to enjoy the better life.

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- (1) They had had the best enlightenment, because they could hear the Truth itself and revelation of God's will, preached by Jesus Himself!
 - (2) But the light against which we sin, will be the measure whereby we will be judged!
 - (3) The greatness of the quantity of information that we have received concerning God's truth, does not release us from the responsibility to repent and trust Jesus!
- d. To people who thought that to do nothing was as sufficient as repenting. Their sin was the sin of refusing to take a positive stand for Jesus Christ!
- (1) How many people today exalt Jesus as a Superman, "a Man born before His time", perhaps a great Prophet, yes, even as God's Son?
 - (2) And yet they do nothing with Him! They take no responsibility for what they know about Jesus of Nazareth!
4. So why does our world have unrest, insecurity, desperation?
BECAUSE WE WILL NOT TRUST JESUS AND REPENT!

Let us listen further to His words:

II JESUS LAYS DOWN HIS OWN CONDITIONS, WHEREBY WE CAN RECEIVE GOD'S TRUST AND REST. (11:25, 26)

Even though He gives us conditions that are absolutely necessary to which we must render whole-hearted and immediate obedience, yet He gives us also His own personal example how we should understand the conditions He requires. What does He do?

- A. He thanks God and rejoices with the Father over the method whereby God chose to reveal His will. This is the grateful acceptance of the will and plans of His Father.
1. Even though He could not reach the unrepentant people and cities, after thousands of attempts, yet He gives God thanks that God had used this method to reveal Himself and that it was God's idea.
 2. Even though there were a very few simple people that truly accepted Jesus, yet Jesus THANKS the Father for them.
 3. Jesus recognizes the universal Lordship of His Father. This

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too is an anchor for our souls, if we acknowledge that there is no place in this universe, no problem in our world over which our God is not fully Master and fully in charge!

4. Jesus praised and thanked God that His plan *really works* to save those people who *can be* taught.

B. But what is God's method to save the world? By revealing these eternal truths to humble seekers, to "little children."

1. Who are "the wise and understanding" of this world, from whom God has hidden His will? These are the people who are "wise" in their own eyes and proud of their own understanding.

—So far as the world could see it was Pilate who was a greater man than Peter, but Jesus could do much more with a Peter than with Pilate!

—The high priest Caiaphas went far higher in the human society than Matthew, but that publican could become an Apostle for eternity, because he could forsake everything to follow Jesus!

2. Who are the "little children", to whom God has given great revelations of His will? These are the humble people who open their lives to follow Jesus' leadership and accept His teaching.

a. The doors of God's Kingdom remain open for those who repent and become little children.

b. These are the people who admit their ignorance, confess their sins and come to Jesus for forgiveness. (I Cor. 1:18-31)

3. Yes, this is God's plan and Jesus thanks Him for it.

III JESUS ACCEPTS THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE AND PRESENTS HIMSELF AS THE ONLY POSSIBLE REVEALER OF GOD (11:27)

A. "All things have been committed to me by my Father."

1. Perhaps we are caused to think immediately of the glory and royalty of God's Son, because we know that, at the end of the world, everything will be the inheritance of Jesus.

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2. But here Jesus is not speaking about the glory and wealth that shall be His.
3. He understands very clearly that the weight of the sins of the whole world have been laid upon HIM!
 - a. There is no arrogance here, but an honest bending of the Lord Jesus Himself to take upon Himself the gigantic weight of a lost mankind upon Himself.
 - b. He had just seen people, that had had the best possible opportunity to be saved, refuse the call of God.
 - c. Perhaps He is reminded of the ancient words of Isaiah:
"All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned every one to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
(53:6)
Our own unwillingness to repent was laid upon God's Son!
 - d. Yes, "the government will be upon his shoulder", but the insignia thereof are not the colorful flags and marching eagles of a great empire, but the bleeding "stripes by which we are healed"!
4. Yes, all things have been committed to Jesus by His Father: the moral responsibility for all men *just like they are*: in their sins, their dying and in their deep need for repentance and redemption!
This is why we are not surprised about what Jesus says next:
 - B. "No one knows the Son but the Father!"
 1. Here is a cry that comes out of the loneliness of the Lord Jesus.
 - a. There is no man on earth that realizes the greatness of the burden of the Son of God.
 - b. Jesus has not found anyone who really understands how He feels among sinners, nor shares His burden.
 2. Jesus has had thousands of followers, but very few of them continued to follow Him, even though those few themselves were deeply unaware of His mission, His purpose, and His Person. Even so late as the last week of His life, before going to the cross, Jesus had to say to them,

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"Have I been so long with you, and you do not yet know me?"

3. Jesus feels deeply His loneliness on earth: no one really knows or understands Him.
 - a. But people must understand Him in order to be saved!
 - b. But we must understand His message, in order thereby to be able to know the Father.

C. "No one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

1. Jesus finds Himself in a world where no one really knows God!
 - a. This means that all the great inventors of religion are liars, if they contradict, diminish or deny the Word of Jesus!
 - b. This means that all the lesser religious lights who have led men away from God's Will are "thieves and robbers"! (Jn. 10:1)

2. This is a world, in Jesus' day and in our own as well, wherein people have lost the very key to life, because they live as if God does not exist. But Jesus knows that God is the central fact of all reality, the greatest, most important fact of all.

3. Jesus prayed: "This is eternal life, that men might know you, the only true God, AND JESUS CHRIST, whom you have sent!" (Jn. 17:3)

4. Only JESUS knew God. Here Jesus expressed the longing to make God known to men.

5. He MUST make God known, but how can He go about the task of revealing God?

D. Here is His method whereby He reveals the Father.

IV. JESUS INVITES HUMBLE DISCIPLES TO COME TO HIM AND LEARN (11:28-30)

A. This young Jew, not more than 33 years old, invites the entire human race to come to Him to learn. He promises that every one, however great his problems might be, shall find rest for his soul! Let the stupendous nature of this invitation sink deep into your heart: feel the gigantic nature of the fraud if

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- the claims implicit in this invitation are false. Feel the power of God's loving mercy, if these claims are true! Here we must decide what we think about Jesus!
- B. But Jesus has to be the teacher, if we are to find rest for our souls. The only ones whom Jesus can help are the "little children". We must be willing to learn EVERYTHING from Him.
1. Jesus has already had too many theologians and professors, who molded His ideas according to their own conceptions! He wants *disciples*, or followers, who are willing to follow Him and live under His discipline. The so-called "great" preachers, professors, priests, bishops, popes, councils, theologians and universities are not what Jesus is looking for! He seeks men and women, boys and girls who are willing to enroll themselves in His school and learn under HIM.
- C. Even though Jesus Himself is the Revealer of the eternal God, even though He Himself is the Creator of heaven and earth, even though He is the Judge before whom all must give account, yet He is gentle and lowly in heart.
1. He is not a teacher that His students need to be afraid of.
 2. He does not boss His students around; they do not need to be afraid to expose their ignorance before Him.
 3. My friend, He could become your Teacher: with Jesus you need fear no ridicule or contempt in His school.
 4. If you are an eager student, you will find Jesus ready to help you, sharing with you the same spirit of joy in knowledge. He will help you at whatever level you find yourself, in order to bring you up to His level of full knowledge of the entire universe! You will find Him a wise and sympathetic Teacher, who will lead you into truth.
 5. How many times has Jesus already shown Himself this kind of Teacher? How many times did the sinners and publicans come to Jesus, even though they had run away from the proud, strict Pharisees? They knew that Jesus was different, so, friend, do not put Jesus in the same class with religious leaders that you know, because He is not at all like any teacher you ever knew. He is in a class all by Himself, but you will enjoy enrolling in the class!

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6. The publicans and sinners of Jesus' day felt the attraction of His gentleness, and they knew that He could help free them from sins that they had for years taken for granted.
- D. In Jesus' school you find SECURITY and rest for your soul!
1. To the tired worker, Jesus gives genuine rest for the body, nerves and mind, because Jesus gives true rest for his SPIRIT. Such a person can now sleep, because he has a forgiven conscience.
 2. To the tired and heavy-laden worshipper, Jesus gives rest also.
 - a. Tired of religious ceremonies, duties, norms and empty forms? Then, Jesus offers you devotion to a Person.
 - b. Tired of defeats and disappointments in the struggle against sin? Then Jesus gives you the refreshment of forgiveness and power to overcome.
 3. To the tired worldly who has found everything to be futile and empty, Jesus offers His fullness, all His friendship and companionship.

INVITATION: Friend, you know your own cares, your own sins, and problems. Let Jesus take your difficulties and free you. Lay all your difficulties down at the feet of Jesus. Enroll yourself in His school; He invites you now.

CHAPTER TWELVE

- Section 26. Jesus Faces Charges of Sabbath Breaking (12:1-14)
Section 27. Jesus the Healing Servant of Jehovah (12:15-21)
Section 28. Jesus Is Attacked For Casting Out Demons and Charged With League With Satan (12:22-37)
Section 29. Jesus Gives the Sign of Jonah and Condemns His Generation (12:38-45)
Section 30. Jesus Refuses to Permit Fleshly Ties to Bind Him (12:46-50)

STUDY OUTLINES

- I. JESUS FACES CHARGES OF SABBATH BREAKING (12:1-14)
 - A. For permitting "grain threshing" on the Sabbath (12:18)