



- What do you think is the worst thing you could possibly do?
  - Perhaps it is this...
  - **Video: Whoosh**
  - Although I would never even think of trying that, our text today reveals something infinitely more dangerous and foolish.
- **Big Idea: The absolute worst thing you could possibly do is reject Jesus Christ.**
  
- Read Luke 10:12-16
- Pray
  
- Review – Luke 10:1-11 – We are called together to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - v. 1-4 – Effective evangelism requires the mission mentality of Christ.
    - H – Have compassion; A – Ask God for help; R – Respond to the call; V – Verify the mission; E – Expect trouble; S – Stay focused; T – Trust the Lord.
  - v. 5-11 – Effective evangelism preaches the mission message of Christ.
    - The message: “Make peace with God, for His kingdom is near.”
    - 1. We must communicate reconciliation to God through Christ.
    - 2. We must communicate the results:

- Blessings for those who believe; curses for those who do not
- The Good News is so good because the bad news is so bad.

### 3. We must call for a response.

Scripture texts like our passage today are one important reason why expository preaching ought to be a non-negotiable for churches of Jesus Christ. I imagine that most of us—if not all—of us here today have probably never before heard this passage preached because it declares truths that wishy-washy ears don't want to hear. Nonetheless, God has revealed His Word just as He has willed, and He has not done so by accident. Furthermore, who are we to pick and choose which parts of it we will and will not consider? Moreover, as we consider these verses this morning, we will discover that reveal some fascinating truths about the divine judgment to come. In fact, in this text, Jesus proclaims at least three truths about the judgment to come, the first of which is this...

#### 1.) **Not all condemnation will be the same.** (v. 12)

- v. 12 – *“I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.”*
- *“...on that day...”* (v. 12)
  - Jesus is calling His hearers to look forward to the inevitable Day of Judgment. (v. 14 – *“...at the judgment...”*)
  - Psalm 96:13 – *“He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and all the nations with his truth.”*
  - Acts 17:31 – *“For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”*
  - Hebrews 9:27 – *“It is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment.”*
- *“... for that town...”*
  - Jesus is referring back to the previous verse (v. 10).
  - The people in question here are people who do not welcome the truth about Jesus Christ.
- *“...it will be more bearable for Sodom than for that town.”*
  - Sodom was the epitome of utter wretchedness.
  - The word, “sodomite,” links homosexuality with Sodom because it was home to the vilest kind of homosexuality.
  - Genesis 18:20 – *“And the LORD said, ‘The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.’”*

-- The exceedingly great sin in Sodom was the sin of homosexuality to the extreme. (Genesis 18:16-19:29)

In the first part of Genesis 19, we read about two angels who come to Sodom in order to warn Lot that God is about to destroy the city in an almighty act of judgment. Well, the homosexuals in the town apparently see how beautiful these angels are, and their perverted passions are excited to the extent that they come to Lot's house to rape them. Lot, then, tries to protect God's angels from these men by offering them his daughters, which, of course, they didn't want. And even after God strikes these evil men with blindness, they are still trying to get to the angels, but they cannot find the door. And, as you know, what ensued was the greatest destruction of any city in the Old Testament when God obliterated that city with fire and brimstone.

For the Jews of Jesus' day, Sodom was still considered to be the most vile and wretched of all places anywhere. Yet, in verse 11, Jesus makes this astonishing statement: He says, "*I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for [the town that rejects the Gospel].*" What? This idea would have been utterly inconceivable to the Jews, who loathed the deeds of the Sodomites and believed that they were God's special people by birth. Yet, even as wretched as the people of Sodom clearly were, Jesus here is telling His messengers that the Great White Throne judgment of Christ will impose a *harsher* sentence upon the regular synagogue-goers of Israel who rejected Jesus Christ than upon them. As shocking as it seems to say, we learn in these verses that an eternal hell more severe than that which the Sodomites will experience awaits you and me if we reject Christ.

Surely this fascinating and terrifying verse inspires the following question: *Why is the condemnation of those who reject Christ worse than that of these vile cities?* And the answer, given in this text and in many places of Scripture is this...

## **2.) The more truth rejected, the severer the punishment.**

- In other words, the more of God's truth a person knows and rejects, the more severe his/her eternal punishment will be.
- v. 13-15 – "*Woe to you, Korazin! 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, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more*

*bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.*

- The main difference between the two sets of towns is the amount of revelation about Christ that they had seen and rejected.
  - Tyre and Sidon
    - These sister cities were Phoenician seaport cities north of Israel on the Mediterranean coast.
    - They were notorious for their corruption and idolatry.
    - In Ezekiel 28, Ezekiel prophesies against Tyre, equating its king with Satan himself, and predicting its utter shame and destruction.
    - Ezekiel 28:18-19 – *“By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”*
    - Although Jesus had been to Tyre, He had performed many greater signs in the company of Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. (v. 13)
  - Korazin, Bethsaida
    - Korazin and Bethsaida were both very close to Capernaum (v. 15), which was Jesus’ headquarters during His extensive ministry in Galilee.
    - Therefore, all three towns were frequent hearers of our Lord’s message, frequent witnesses of His miraculous power over disease, demons, and even death.
    - In verse 13, Jesus pronounces a curse on them, saying, *“Woe to you, Korazin! 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, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.”*
- Judgment has more to do with the degree of one’s rejection than the description of his sins.
  - The severest judgment is based not on the sins of the cities but on the degree to which they rejected the truth of Christ.
  - Luke 12:47-48 – *“That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his 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.”*

-- What has the servant who “has been given much” received?

-- It’s not money or talents; it is *knowledge* of his Master’s will.

-- Why is the punishment so much worse for the one who knows the Father’s will?

-- Please hear this today: His punishment is worse because *revelation demands a response*.

-- God has not given us His Word for our amusement; He has given it so that we will obey it.

-- James 1:22 – “*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*”

-- Right now, if you are indifferent or apathetic about Jesus Christ, you are doing the most dangerous thing you could possibly do by sitting in this church and hearing the preaching of the Gospel.

-- In fact, you would be much safer flying off a 10,000 foot ramp with only a Dixie cup in which to land than to listen to the preaching of God’s Word.

-- Maybe this is one reason why so many people seek after shallow preaching?

### **3.) Rejecting Christ incurs the severest punishment.**

-- In Jesus Christ, we witness the perfect revelation of God and His glory.

-- Hebrews 1:3 – “*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.*”

-- John 14:9 – “*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.*”

-- Colossians 1:16-20 – “*...all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*”

-- The absolute worst thing you could possibly do is reject the Gospel Jesus Christ.

-- Hebrews 10:26-29 – “*If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, <sup>27</sup> but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the*

*enemies of God.* <sup>28</sup> *Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.* <sup>29</sup> *How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"*

- v. 27 – Those who reject the message of Jesus Christ are rejecting their only chance for salvation. Thus, nothing remains for them except “*a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.*”
- v. 28 – In the OT, there were severe and deadly consequences prescribed for anyone who rejected the Law of Moses.
- v. 29 – However awful it was to reject the Law of Moses, it far worse to reject the message of Jesus Christ.
- John MacArthur – “The severest eternal punishment belongs to those who rejected the most exposure to the gospel.”
- v. 15 – “*He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.*”
- *Are you rejecting Him today?*

### -- **Application**

1. Our primary concern in life must be this: How am I responding to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. We ought to be far more concerned about people rejecting the Gospel than misbehaving in society.
  - Many churches and Christians have done horrible harm by being more concerned about changing bad behavior than changing bad beliefs.
  - Good behavior will always follow good beliefs, not vice versa.
3. We are negligent in proclaiming the Gospel if we fail to warn unbelievers about the grave consequences of rejecting it.
  - As with the whole presentation of Jesus Christ, this warning must be communicated in love because we love.
  - As always, we never condemn, but we must warn of the condemnation God promises for all who reject Jesus Christ.
4. The main application is simple: Do not reject Jesus Christ.

- This text is an urgent warning to indifferent fence-sitters and lovers of the world.
  - You have heard the truth. If you reject it now, Jesus assures us that your eternal punishment will be worse than Sodom's.
  - God gives us this urgent warning because He loves us and is calling us to embrace His eternal love through His Son, Jesus Christ, who gave His life so that we might live through Him.
  - In light of these warnings, how could anyone among us today remain indifferent about Jesus Christ?
- However, those who welcome the revelation of Jesus Christ are forever blessed and rescued from God's almighty wrath.
  - Romans 8:1 – *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*
  - Romans 10:9-11 – *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’”*