

Scripture for the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, July 5, 2020

Introduction to the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 11:16-19 & 25-30

At the beginning of chapter 11 of Matthew's gospel, it says, "Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he went on from there to each and proclaim his message to the cities." Following this Jesus has a long-distance exchange with John the Baptist, who is in prison at the time. Given this reference to John the Baptist, the great preacher of repentance, it is not surprising that Jesus would pick on this theme and speak of the "woes of the unrepentant cities." Listen now to a reading from the gospel of Matthew:

A Reading from Matthew 11:16-30

¹⁶ "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ¹⁷ 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' ¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; ¹⁹ the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."^[a]

Woes to Unrepentant Cities

²⁰ Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades. For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you."

Jesus Gives Thanks

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I thank^[b] you, God, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶ yes, Lord, for such was your gracious will.^[c] ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Abba God; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, 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.”