



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion
36 – Rise Up At the Judgement

Announcements:
8/7 @After Service -
Congregational
Meeting
8/10 @7:00 -
Corporate
Prayer
8/11 @6:30 -
Grace Group
8/14 @8:30 -
Sunday School
8/14 @5:30 -
Joint Service with
La Luz Bible Church

ICE BREAKER: Would you consider yourself a tattletale?

READ: Matthew 12:41-42

The world HATES the idea of judging. We live in a postmodern society that thinks that we should allow people to live out “their truths”. The thought is “as long as it’s not hurting anyone let them be”. From this point of view, to have any sort of definite standard of right and wrong is (ironically) wrong. Scripture teaches us, however, that there is truth. More to the point there is an objective measure of right and wrong, and we are called to stand for right and truth. It is not “judging” to tell people when they are breaking the commands of God, it is what is asked of us. Wonderfully, we have examples of this very thing happening in our passage for today through the Ninevites and the Queen from the South. But more than just being an example in “rising at the judgment” these two serve as to teach us a great many things. On Sunday, we looked at what these witnesses tell us about Jesus, today we will be looking at what this tells us about the ones being judged.

First we read that the Ninevites will “rise up at the judgment of this generation and condemn it, *for they repented* at the preaching of Jonah.” The issue here with the generation of the Pharisees is that they will not repent. Their hearts are hard and they cannot - or more to the point will not - hear the words of the prophet (here the Prophet, Priest and King...). I jokingly say that Jonah’s sermon preached to Nineveh is among the worst ever preached. It is not a long exposition of some portion of Scripture, there is no call to respond, he does not lay out the goodness and mercy of God. No, he is blunt and direct and doesn’t even offer hope. “Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.” (Jonah 3:4). However God uses this to change the hearts of the Ninevites. They repent. In sackcloth and ashes they seek God. So it is no surprise that they would rise up and testify against the Pharisees. The Pharisees have the greatest teacher ever, the one who speaks with authority, the one who brings light and life. And they will not humble themselves and repent like the heathen, evil, Ninevites. This leads us to our first lesson, we should be mindful that we are to call people to REPENT.

DISCUSS: What are things that we often call people to do other than repent? Why might this be problematic? (Hint: think of the parable we talked about on Sunday)

The second example is the “Queen of the South”. What is her judgment? She came from the farthest reaches of civilization to gain wisdom from Solomon. She was willing to pay a cost, to do whatever it takes to learn from God’s king. The issue with the Pharisees is that they are happy in their ignorance. They have the fount of wisdom, the very Word of God in front of them and they would rather try and test him, or demand a sign. The queen of the south judges because she is self-aware enough to know that she does not have all the answers but the Pharisees are so full of themselves that they think they know better. It is important to note, the issue with both is not the amount of knowledge they have, but the heart. If we think about it there is a beautiful reversal here. The Queen shows her wisdom by seeking out more and the Pharisees show their lack of wisdom by thinking they have it all. .

DISCUSS: What lessons can we learn about ourselves by looking at the Queen of the South? What lessons can we learn from looking at the Pharisees?