Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Furnace of Fire
Scripture: Matthew 13:47-52
Code: 2304

And now for the high and sacred privilege of coming to God's precious Word and I would encourage you, if you will, to take your Bible and turn with me to Matthew chapter 13 ... Matthew chapter 13, and we are examining this morning verses 47 through 52 ... Matthew 13, verses 47 through 52.

We come to the last of seven parables given by our Lord Jesus Christ in this thirteenth chapter. And this one is the climax. This particular parable is a parable about judgment. It is a parable about hell. And the keynote of the parable is found in verse 50, the furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Our Lord spoke very much and very often about hell. He said many things about the abode of the damned, the wicked, the Christ rejecters. But of all of the startling, terrifying things that Jesus ever said, perhaps the most startling was when He said to the Jewish leaders, - How can ye escape the damnation of hell? In Matthew 23:33. How can ye escape the damnation of hell?

It seems strange to us to hear words like that coming from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. For we don't associate the Lord Jesus Christ with hell, as often as we ought. He said more about hell than he did about love. He said more about hell than all the other biblical preachers combined. And if we are to model our preaching after His, then hell is a major theme for us.

The other night I heard a teen age punk rocker being interviewed. And the reporter said to her - What are you looking forward to? What is in the future for punk rock? She said - Death. I'm looking forward to death. He said - Why? She said - I want to go to hell. Because hell will be fun. I hope I go to hell, I want to die so I cat get to hell and have fun.

What deception. Hell is not fun. One writer said, "There is no way to describe hell, nothing on earth can compare with it. No living person has any real idea of it. No madman in wildest flights of insanity ever beheld its horror. No man in delirium ever pictured a place so utterly terrible as this. No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produced a terror to match the mildest hell. No murder scene with splashed blood and oozing wound ever suggested a revoltion that could touch the borderlands of hell. Let the most gifted writer exhaust his skill in describing this roaring cavern of unending flame and he would not even brush in fancy the nearest edge of hell," end quote.

This is a parable in which our Lord warns about hell. Now remember, in these parables the Lord is telling us what it will be like in this period of the world's history, this form of His rule. He is the King and He rules in the world. And He is allowing, in this period of time, good and evil to grow together as we saw in the parable of the wheat and the tares. He's ... He's tolerant of the good and evil through this period. But in the end will come a judgment. And that's why this is the last parable. We have now swept through the parables that describe the nature of the kingdom, the power of the kingdom, the personal appropriation of the kingdom, and now we come to the climax and the end and the judgment. And it is a warning. It is a fearful warning that in the end there will be an eternal separation of the damned from the redeemed. And the world, you see, is moving toward this. Every human life is moving toward that inevitable hour, today at least, five thousand two hundred and eighty two people in the United States alone will die and enter eternity, most of them will go to hell. And this final parable brings us up short with a sense of severe warning.

Now, I want us, first of all, to look at the picture the Lord paints, the picture is first. Verse 47, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea and gathered from every kind."

Now this gives us the imagery that we need to understand the teaching here. Fishing in our Lord's time was a common enterprise. Fishing was a way of life. Fishing for some of the disciples was their way of life, so they would understand very clearly of which He spoke. Basically there were three ways to fish. And these three ways are still being used in that country in the Lake of Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee. First was with a line and hook which caught fishes one at a time. In Matthew chapter 17 and verse 27, the Lord Jesus said to Peter - Put your line and your hook into the sea and catch a fish and open its mouth and find a piece of money and take it and use if for your taxes and for mine. And that was an illustration of the kind of fishing they did which was done with a line and a hook.

Earlier, in the fourth chapter of Matthew, the Lord had come across the disciples, Peter and Andrew, and they were fishing it says, in 4:18, casting a net into the sea. The second king of fishing was a casting net ... amphiblstron is the word in the Greek. And it was a very special net. It was a net that was like a large circle and on the outer perimeter of the circle were weights. It was pulled together in the middle. And there was a rope attached to the arm of the fishermen. The net was draped over the shoulder and as the fishermen came to the shore, he threw the net and had become, of course, so deft at it that it would go into its entire circular: form and it would hit the water as a large circle and as it sunk toward the bottom it would capture in it as the lead weights pulled down the edges, all the fish that were in that area. So the fisherman would watch until he saw the school of fish, and then he would spin that thing and it would open its full circle and capture the fish and then that cord attached to his wrist would be pulled tight and it would pull the net together until he had a sack and he would drag the net on to the shore full of the catch.

And that is the net our Lord used to speak of being fishers of men, throw out the net and catch men for Christ and pull them in. But that is not the net that is used here. This is a completely different

Greek term. This term is a unique term. It is the term sagn and it has to do with what we'll call a seine net, or a troll net. It's a very distinct term. It speaks of a very, very large net. Now when I say very large, I mean very large. Lensky, the commentator, says that some of these nets covered one half mile of area. Very large nets. A net that could not be worked with the hand of a man. How it was used is very simple to understand.

One end of this large net was attached to the shoreline. The other end was attached to a boat. As the boat left the shore, it pulled the net into a form where the net was stretched between the boat out in the lake and the net hooked to the shore. And then the boat would begin to move in a circle. And as it moved in a circle, it would sweep into this massive net, all the life in front of the net. It would complete an entire circle, come all the way back to where it was attached, and would have gathered into that entire net, all the life that was in the sea covered by that net.

Because the top of the net had floats, it floated on the surface of the water. The bottom of the net had weights, it sunk to the bottom so that the net moved through the sea like a vertical wall capturing everything. Now what our Lord wants us to understand in this net is basically two things ... one, is the immense size of the net. And two, is the fact that it brings in everything... a conglomerate inclusive catch. Now once this has happened and the boat has moved through the sea, this great vertical wall has swept up everything, living and dead, it sometimes drug the bottom and pulled up all kinds of things, seaweed, every form of life that would be there would be caught in that net, then it comes back to the shore and at that point we're introduced to verse 48.

"And when the net was then full, they drew to shore and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

Now, the central figure of the parable is a group of fishermen. They're on the shore in verse 48. And lying there at the edge of the water is this recently drawn massive net and it is literally soaking and teeming with life, filled with the conglomerate of creatures taken from the water. And then begins a very slow, deliberate careful, patient, unhurried, accurate, knowledgeable, skillful process of sorting out the good from the bad. They sat down. It was something they did very carefully ... very patiently.

Now this scene would be very common to the people to whom our Lord spoke, particularly the disciples. They would take the good and put it into some vessels, very often water-contained vessels, to keep the fish alive if they were to be transported. If they were immediately to be used in some form, they could be put in another vessel. The bad was just thrown away.

Now the picture is very clear, isn't it? Let's look secondly, at the principle ... verse 49. And here's our Lord's own interpretation. "So shall it be at the end of the age: the angels shall come forth and separate the wicked from among the righteous." We can stop at that point.

There's a lot that you could say about that parable. There's a lot you could do with it. There are some interesting possibilities. But the Lord is only interested in one element and that is the separating process that went on on the shore as a picture of the angelic separation in judgment ... that's what He's after.

You see, all along in this era, as we've been learning, the good and the evil go together and God tolerates the evil. But the time is coming when He will make a separation ... between those who know the King and are subjects of the King and know the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who do not. And that separation is inevitable and it is ultimate. And little by little, imperceptibly and silently, that net moves through the sea of time drawing all men to the shores of eternity for that inevitable separation. That is the principle. The net draws in all kinds of fish. It is indiscriminating, in the sense, that it just catches everything in its way. And so it is it says in verse 47, the kingdom of heaven is like that net, it moves silently through the sea of life, drawing men, almost without them knowing it, to the shore of eternity. And by the time they awaken to what is happening, it is too late ... they're already there. They are drawn to the separation.

Now this same truth was taught in the parable of the wheat and the tares,as you can go back to verse 41 and see. "The Son of man shall send His angels, and they'll gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity, and they shall be cast into a furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Same idea ... but the Lord repeats it.

Now, the only spiritual thing that the Lord pinpoints in this parable is that last act of the fishermen. Every thing else passes without comment. And I think we ought to leave the rest without comment ... and just take what our Lord meant to teach. When He spoke of the casting net, He used that in a positive way to speak to the disciples of catching men for Christ. When He speaks of this drag-net as it's called, or this troll net, or seine net, or sagn net, He is talking about gathering men for judgment.

Look at verse 49, "So shall it be at the end of the age." When man's day is over and Jesus returns to set up His glorious kingdom, then comes the judgment. Now this is not a ... a technical, chronological, eschatological layout, this is not trying to pinpoint every element of judgment, every time and place and are we talking about the great white throne, or the sheep and the goats, or the bema seat judgment or whatever, this is just a general statement that all in the world are caught ultimately in the net of judgment, to be separated in the end. And you notice again, would-you please, in verse 49 that the angels are the executioners? The angels are the separators, just as we saw in verse 41, just as we see in Matthew 24; the angels come with the Lord to act out judgment. Just as we see in Matthew 25, just as we see repeatedly in Revelation, particularly chapter 14. The angels are the agents of God's judgment. So while the kingdom may, for a while, tolerate good and evil growing together, the separation is moving closer and closer all the time.

Jesus spoke of this same thing in Matthew chapter 25 when He said in verse 31, "The Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory." And what will He do when He comes? It says, "And before Him shall He gather all the nations and He shall separate one from another. Separation. "And He'll say to them, on His right hand, Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And He'll say to them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

And Jesus said in John chapter 5 that there's coming a resurrection of all men, some to the resurrection of life and some to the resurrection of damnation. There will be a final separation, an eternal destiny will be determined for every soul that has ever lived on the face of the earth.

Now some people have asked - Why this parable is included if the basic idea of separation is even also included in the parable of the wheat and the tares? And the answer to that is several things. Number one, it is repeated because the wheat and the tares emphasize particularly the co-existence, this emphasizes only the separation. It is repeated also because the Lord has a compassionate heart and He wants to add one more warning. That's typical of our Lord. He warned about hell ... many times ... many times, so concerned was He that men not go there. Many times He said - Watch, watch, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man comes. Many times He warned the people not to take lightly their sins because there would be the inevitability of the accounting that God would make. He talked about the days of Noah, that men would be living in ease and apparent prosperity, and happiness, going through the motions of life, and there would come horrifying judgment. He warned again, and again and again. He told men that through His prophet John the Baptist, that He would come with unquenchable fire to burn up those that were lost. He looked out at the world in Matthew 9 and He saw a harvest moving toward judgment. He was compassionate enough to see men on the way to damnation and call to them. And so that's why this is here. It emphasizes the separation that is the end of this age and it gives the Lord a chance to release that compassionate heart.

See, the Bible says God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. The Bible says that He is not willing that any should perish. The Bible says that God our Savior will have all men to be saved. Jesus wept over Jerusalem and said - 0 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft I would have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood, but you would not. You will not come unto Me, He said pensively, that you might have eternal life. His heart of compassion is one that warns because He loves.

Now look again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net ... and you can see the vividness of this imagery. That net moves through the world. It is invisible to those around who can't yet see it. And if perchance it touches the back of a fish, the fish simply flits a little further ahead and enjoys the freedom he things is his permanently. And men live in this world imagining themselves to be free, moving about, fulfilling

their own desires, going here and going there as they will, with little knowledge that the net comes closer and closer and closer. People float about in the liberty of the wide-deep sea of life, not knowing the invisible lines of judgment move closer and closer and closer. And each time they are touched by it, they move a little further away. And they're touched again and they move a little further away. And finally they've moved one time and they've hit it on the other side because it's moving toward the shore and then wildly the fish may dart for the sea only to be caught again in the same net ... finally to be dragged in the shore and the last throws of a flailing and flipping enter into a silent death. And that's how it is. Men may not perceive the kingdom, they may not see God moving in the world, but He is moving. And men very often when touched by the gospel of Jesus Christ, or threatened by the threat of judgment, dart into the freedom they think is ahead of them but sooner or later they run right back into the same net because there's no freedom there. And they are inexorably moving toward inevitable judgment.

All men are gathered in the net. The kingdom will ultimately engulf them all. And God with His angels will separate.

Now, that leads me to a third thought, and that is the peril ... the peril. Verse 50, "And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Now that is a fearful verse. And I confess to you that it affects me just as it affects anybody. It is a horrifying, fearful verse. And if there's any doctrine in the Bible that you wish were not there it is the doctrine of hell, but that does not eliminate it. It is there. And this is the heart of the matter. --Cast into the furnace of fire -- those are terrifying words from our Lord. A d yet He spoke more of hell than anybody else. And I think there's a reason.

Do you know what I think? I think that if Jesus hadn't taught us about hell, we wouldn't believe whoever did. It had to be Him. It is so inconceivable, so causes us to be revulsed. We cannot conceive of eternal damnation. And it had to be our Lord who said this or we never wouldhave been able to accept it. It was His own special emphasis. And He was a preacher of hell. More than anything else, He threatened men with hell. And if you don't think He did then you haven't been carefully noting His ministry.

In chapter five, for example, and you could take ... I could spend ... you know, the whole morning just on the statements Jesus made about it. Don't turn with me, just listen and jot down verses if you care to, but listen to what He said in Matthew 5:22, He said, "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." In verse 29 of chapter 5, "If your right eye offend you, pluck it out and cast it from you for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not your whole body should be cast into hell." Verse 30, "If your right hand offend you, cut it off, throw it away, for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish and not that your whole body should be cast into hell."

In chapter 7, verse 27, He said, "And the rain descended and the flood came and blew and beat on that house and it fell and great was the fall of it." And that's an allusion to damnation as well.

In chapter 8 verse 12, "The sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Chapter 11 and verse 20, "He began to upbraid the cities in which most of His mighty works were done because they repented not" and He says to them, "You will be brought down to hell." Serious ... serious words from our Lord.

The same thing is true in chapter 12, He says in verse 36, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment, for by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be damned, or condemned."

He talks about a demon who leaves a man and then seven more come back in more wicked than himself, and the last state of that man is the first, even so shall it be unto this wicked generation.

In chapter 18, and these are examples, it says, "Whosoever offends a little child who believes in Me, it would be better off if a millstone were hanged around his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea." And then He goes back into talking about being cast into everlasting fire, verse 8, into everlasting hell fire, verse 9, chapter 18.

This was a constant part of what our Lord taught. And you go into chapter 21, verse 43, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits of it and whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder."

Chapter 23 talks about hell repeatedly. Chapter 24, chapter 25, Mark chapter 9, Luke chapter 6, Luke chapter 12, Luke chapter 16, it just goes on and on. Jesus told a whole story about a man that died and went to hell, being in torment, screamed for someone to come with water and cool his tongue.

Now if you, then, are to evaluate what should be the emphasis of preaching, based on the example of Christ, it should be preaching on hell. Our generation doesn't do that. It's convicting that we say so little about hell. It's so hard to believe. It's so terrifying. It is so awesome that it had to come from the Lord or we never would have been able to accept it.

Now, what is this furnace of fire? What is hell? Let me give you four truths about hell ... that I think will answer that question. Number one, hell is a place of unrelieved torment. It is a place of unrelieved torment. It is a place of a horrible misery. And the Bible defines it as darkness, outer darkness. That is deep pit darkness, darkness that's way out from the light, impenetrable darkness. Darkness that closes in. And it is darkness without the hope of light forever. Have you ever been in the darkness

and longed for the daylight? Have you ever been in the darkness and longed for someone to turn a light on? To be in that encroaching, encompassing, moving kind of darkness and know that for all the eons of eternity, you will never see light ... is how our Lord describes hell ... unrelieved darkness forever ... with no hope of the light ... no hope of the dawn. And the Biblealso says it is a fire. Now it is not a fire that we would know as fire, to burn something in this world. But fire is God's way of describing it because it is a tortuous, unrelieved kind of fire ... more terrible than any fire that we would ever know. But fire describes the torment of the damned; blackness describes the torment of the damned, no light, no light ever, ever ... no relief from the suffering, the agony and the pain, forever. And there's only two times in all of Scripture that we have any insight into how people respond to hell. The one is the Lord's parable in Luke 16 where He says the man cried out in torment and said - Cool my tongue for I'm tormented in this flame. And the other is that constant statement of our Lord there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The response to hell is not fun, it is weeping, that's crying, wailing, screaming and grinding of teeth in pain. That's what the Bible says. That's hell.

It is a place of unrelieved torment. Secondly, it is a place of unrelieved torment for both body and soul ... for both body and soul. Soul being the inner part. When a person dies, their soul goes out of the presence of God, into the torment of hell. It may not be the full final lake of fire that comes after the judgment in the great white throne, for that needs a transcendent body to endure it, but it is a torment just as well as illustrated by the rich man who in hell was tormented. When a person dies now, their soul descends into that torment. In the future, there will be a resurrection of the bodies of the damned, they will be given a transcendent body that will then go into a lake of fire. It will be a body not like the body we have now. It will be a very different one. They will be resurrected just like we will, as Christians. We will be resurrected because this body could never live eternally in heaven, right? We have to have a transcendent body, a glorified body, a different body, and so do the damned. And they will be raised, John 5, they will be raised in new bodies for the single purpose of being punished forever in those bodies. That's what the Bible says ... tormented forever. They have to have a body to fit that eternal torment.

And that's why Jesus in Matthew 10:28 said, "Fear not them that can destroy the body, but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." You see, hell is soul and body. Some people think it's just bad memories. No, it isn't just bad memories. It isn't just the inner thinking processes; it is that body as well. Transcendent, eternal bodies, greater than anything we have on this earth, are going to be given to the damned so that they can suffer in those bodies forever. And that's the only reason that they'll have those bodies. With the present body, man couldn't endure hell. You ... the body that we have now would be consumed in a moment. So as God fits the redeemed with new bodies for heaven, He fits the damned with new bodies for hell.

We know a little about that ... from two things the Lord said. He said, first of all, the worm dieth not. Now what did He mean by that? When a body goes into the grave and to decay, worms descend into

that body and they begin to consume that body and the worms will die when the food is gone. So once the body is consumed, the worms die. But in hell, the worms never die because the body, though it is continually being consumed, is never consumed. So the worm never dies. In other words, t he Lord was saying the unrelieved torment of body goes on and on. And it says also, the fire is not quenched. Now a fire always goes out when the fuel is gone. But the fuel will never be gone, though the burning goes on, the fuel is never consumed. And so you have unrelieved torment of body and soul.

And that brings me to the third thought, you have in hell - a place of relieved torment of body and soul in varying degrees ... in varying degrees. In other words, for some people, hell will be worse than others. For all who are there, it will be horrible, it will be ultimate suffering, there will be no relief for that ... but there will be even more severe degrees of suffering for some. It says in Hebrews 10, "Of how much more severe punishment shall they be thought worthy who have trodden underfoot the Son of God and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." People who have stepped on Jesus Christ, who have rejected his cross, will know a greater hell than those who have not. There will be degrees, just as there will be degrees of reward in

heaven.

We saw that, also, I think, in Matthew chapter 11, when it said, "It will be more tolerable for Sodom than for you." In other words, it's only relative, it isn't going to be tolerable for anyone, but it will appear to be more tolerable for them than for you because of what you have experienced. You had Jesus Christ in your city, they didn't. You rejected Him with more light; therefore hell will be more severe for you.

And then you have, of course, that incredible parable in Luke 12 where the Lord says, "To the servant who knew and didn't do right, many stripes. To the servant who didn't know and didn't do right, a few stripes." So, hell will be unrelieved torment of body in soul in varying degrees. But John Gerstner says, "Hell will have such severe degrees that a sinner, were he able, would give the whole world if his sins could be one less."

And fourthly, hell is a place of unrelieved torment for body and soul in varying degrees endlessly... endlessly. The worm never dies, the fire never goes out, the light never breaks, the sweet relief of death never comes, endlessly. The only reason or the only way in which we in this life can even make it through trials and pain and suffering and disease is because we believe there will be an end to it. But they won't have that. You can imagine the resultant insanity that will come. And you say - Are you sure it's everlasting? It's just as everlasting as heaven is because in the same verse, the Lord used the same terms ... Matthew 25:46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, the righteous into everlasting life." Whatever everlasting life is in terms of its length, so is everlasting punishment. That's hell.

God never prepared it for people. He prepared it for the devil and his angels ... but people choose to go there. Inconceivable misery ... some people have been in this kind of torment in their souls waiting for that body for thousands of years and they're no closer to the end then they were when they began. No wonder Jesus had to teach this doctrine.

You say - Well, how do you avoid hell? You avoid hell only by the ... receiving of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you don't appropriate the kingdom, you see, if you don't take the treasure, if you don't purchasethe pearl of great price, there's no way out.

John Bunyan, that great saint of God, wrote this, "In hell thou shalt have none but a company of damned souls with an innumerable company of devils to keep company with thee. While thou art in this world, the very thought of the devils appearing to thee makes thy flesh to tremble and thine hair ready to stand upright on thy head. But oh, what wilt thou do when not only the supposition of the devil's appearing, but the real society of all the devils of hell will be with thee howling, roaring and screeching in such a hideous manner that thou wilt be even at thy wit's end and ready to run stark mad again for anguish and torment. If after ten thousand years, an end should come, there would be comfort. But here is thy misery, here thou must be forever. When thou seest what an innumerable company of howling devils thou art amongst, thou shalt think this again - this is my portion forever. When thou hast been in hell so many thousand years as there are stars in the firmament, or drops in the sea, or sands on the seashore, yet thou hast to lie there forever. Oh, this one word - ever - how will it torment thy soul."

And many are in the net moving to that inevitable furnace of fire.

Now, that leads us to the fourth and final point, the proclamation. We saw the picture, principle, the peril; the proclamation is in verse 51, look at it. "Jesus said to them, Have you understood all these things?" Literally, the verb understood is - put it together. Have you put all this together? Have you got this all put together in your minds? That this form of the kingdom has good and evil going together? That the good is going to continue to permeate, continue to grow, continue to influence? That in order to be a part of the kingdom you have to purchase by giving all you have for all Christ is? Have you put it all together? And do you see that it's going to go along like this with good and evil until the end and then comes a final separation? Do you have it?

"And they said unto Him, Yes, Lord." We understand it. We understand it. And I believe He accepted the correctness of their affirmative answer, otherwise He couldn't have said what He did in verse 52. He's saying to them - Do you understand this? Why does He say that to them? Listen to me, because back in 9:38, He saw the world as a harvest moving to judgment, He saw that God would come and put that sickle in the harvest. And He said - I ... pray with Me that the Father would send forth laborers, send forth people into His harvest to warn men. And so in chapter 10 He called the

disciples, didn't He? And in chapters 11 and 12, He trained and prepared the disciples. And in chapter 13, He taught the disciples. And now He says - Are you ready to go out and be those warners in the harvest? Are you ready to go out with the message? And they say - We ... we've got it. We understand it.

And so, this is what He says, "Then here's what you're like," verse 52, "every grammeteus," that's a word that we translate scribe, but it means a learner, a teacher, an interpreter of the law, the Old Testament, "every trained teacher is instructed," and that's from the verb matheteu, is discipled, "concerning the kingdom of heaven."

Now, He's discipled them concerning the kingdom, so He's talking about them. Every one of you, prepared, trained learners, have been discipled in the things of the kingdom of heaven ... you're trained now, you're prepared now. That ... that's what He's saying. In fact, you could translate it - You are now discipled, biblical scholars and teachers. That's what a scribe was, really. He was a student, an interpreter, a transmitter of Scripture, he was known as atheologian, a lawyer and a teacher and preacher. They were members of the Sanhedrin. They were acknowledged authorities on the Old Testament and tradition. They were called Rabbi. They were influential. And He's saying - I've done the same to you, just like the Jews do with their scribes, I've discipled you, I've made you into discipled, biblical scholars and teachers. And now, here's what you're like, verse 52, "You're like a man who is the head of a house who brings out of his storehouse things new and old."

What does that mean? The Lord says - Now I've discipled you ... I've trained you ... I've prepared you ... I've nurtured you ... so that you could be the laborers to go into the harvest and warn men and now you are like a man who is the head of his house. And the man who was the head of his house has a storehouse and out of that storehouse he dispensed to people their needs. They needed a certain kind of food, they needed a certain kind of clothing, they needed a certain kind of care, whatever it was they needed, he dispensed. And he was wise enough to dispense the new and the old so he didn't always give out the new so that the old ultimately became useless. It's kind of like the leftovers, you know, once a week you're going to get them because if you don't get them they're going to get thrown away ultimately. And the wise head of a household dispenses the old with the new in balance, being a steward of everything that he possesses. And the Lord says - This is what you're like. Now you have a storehouse and that storehouse is filled with old and new. What do you mean? They knew the Old Testament and now they had heard the mysteries of the kingdom. They knew the old covenant truth and the dawn of the new covenant was coming upon them. They could not only tell them about the Old Testament and Jewish tradition, but they could dispense the new mysteries of the kingdom, right? They were one up on the scribes. All the scribes had was the old stuff ... the old stuff ... the old stuff. But He says - You're the householder who has the old and the new and in perfect balance. God called you, and trained you, and prepared you to spread it out.

That's an interesting verb that's used there, it says the man who is a head of a house brings forth ... it literally means to fling out, or to scatter abroad. In other words, you've got all this treasure now, fling it out. It talks about liberality and richness. There's a lot there. Now that you've been discipled and now that you are trained biblical scholars and teachers fling it out, give them the Old and the New in perfect balance that which God said in the past, and that which is new in the form of the kingdom.

Now, do you see what He's saying to them? This all comes out of chapter 9 verse 38; men are on the way to hell. Now I want you to see how the kingdom's going to be, good and evil, but ultimately it's going to end in a separation. And now you know this, now dispense it, proclaim it.

Beloved, I submit to you that our message based on this is hell. That's our message. The world is going to hell. In the parable of Matthew 22, the Lord gives a very similar illustration. There's a wedding. Lots of people show up at the wedding. But then the king comes in. And the wedding has gathered everybody, but the king comes in and he sees this guy who doesn't have a wedding garment and he says - What are you doing here? You don't have a wedding garment. In other words, you got caught in the net of the kingdom but you're not really one of the real ones. You don't have a wedding garment. And it says the man was speechless, he had nothing to say. He had no claim to make. And the Lord said - Tie him up and throw him into outer darkness ... for many are called, few are chosen. The same principle.

The kingdom net catches a lot of people, but not all that are caught are going to be part of the kingdom. We have a tremendous responsibility. It's given unto us to know the mysteries of the kingdom, isn't it? But unto them it isn't given. We have what they need. And Paul said in II Corinthians 5, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." If you can't get your heart exercised about the fact that people are dying and going to hell every second you breathe, then there's something wrong, isn't there? That's the epitome of selfishness.

Our Christianity today has lost this somehow. Recently, well just two days ago, a thing came across my desk from a Christian broadcasting organization. They were sending us their policy for programming. This is what it said ... I won't tell you the name of it, but:

"Such-and-such a broadcasting network wants to be a good neighbor to the variety of listeners." Then it lists all different kinds of people. "Therefore when you are preparing your program for these stations, please avoid using the following: criticism of other religions, conversion, missionaries, believers, unbelievers, old covenant, new covenant, church, the cross, crucifixion, Calvary, Christ, the blood of Christ, salvation through Christ, redemption through Christ, the Son of God, Jehovah or the Christian life."

Then it said this, "These people listening are hungering for words of comfort. We ask you to adhere to these restrictions so that God's Word can continue to go forth. Please help us maintain our position of

bringing comfort to this suffering people."

That's not comfort ... that's damnation ... false comfort damns people. You must tell people the truth. Well, let's pray.

Now we know, Father, know we know. Have you understood these things? Yes ... we understand. Then we are trained biblical scholars and teachers who are to be like the head of a house, flinging out this treasure of both old truth and new that men might be warned of the harvest, the separation, the net. Father, help us to be faithful, to set aside the frivolity and foolishness of life for what really matters ... men's eternal souls. Father, I pray that You'll bring to the prayer room those who need so much to come. May no one in this place think they can escape the net. May no one think it isn't true. May Your Spirit drive them to embrace Christ that they may know the joy and bliss of eternal life here and now and forever in Your presence for Christ's sake. Amen.

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