

**Matthew 13: 52 & 53; “The Parable of the Householder”, Session # 3 – “A Faithful & Wise Servant”, Presented by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in the Adult Sunday School.**

**Matthew 13: 52** – “Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.” (NKJV)

**New American Standard Translation** – “And Jesus said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”

**English Standard Version** – “And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

### **1. Explanation of the Office of Scribe**

We have here a concluding Parable to the 7 Parables given by the Lord Jesus here in Matthew chapter 13. It is a Parable concerning the scribes of the New Testament kingdom of God. These scribes are not the scribes who were related to the Chief Priests and the Pharisees; those who were legalists, and who thought that they understood spiritual things correctly, but they didn't. They didn't understand the way of righteousness. These scribes are those ministers and pastors who know the Lord and are able to bring forth things old and new which relate to their teaching and preaching ministry.

**Matthew 5: 19 & 20** – “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

**Question # 1** – What kind of righteousness will it take to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?

Many of those men were directly responsible for persecuting and putting to death our Lord Jesus Christ. He had this to say to them before He went to the cross:

**Matthew 23: 13** – “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” “For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

**Question # 2** – “Why did the Lord Jesus pronounce a woe on the scribes and Pharisees at the end of His earthly ministry?”

You can see here that the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of Christ which we enter by believing the gospel of Christ and are born again by the Spirit of God. When we enter we truly begin to understand spiritual things in relation to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. The scribes in Jesus' day were hypocrites, Jesus said, because they shut the kingdom of heaven against men. They would not let anyone know the truth as it is in Jesus, or the fact that salvation is by grace through faith in Him.

**Dr. Edward Robinson in his Dictionary** of the Holy Bible says a scribe in the earlier Hebrew writings was the person who communicated to the people the commands of the king, like the modern secretary of state.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 8: 17** – “Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were the priests; Seriah was the scribe.”

**That is** – he was the secretary who took things down for the king.

**Question # 3** – What was did a scribe do in the times of David the king?

**Robinson goes on to say:** “In the latter times of the O.T. especially after the captivity, and in the New Testament, a scribe was a person skilled in the Jewish law, a teacher or interpreter of the law.”

## **2. Ezra was a godly example of an Old Testament Scribe.**

### **a. He acted as a Householder bringing forth both old things and new.**

(He knew what God had commanded in the Old Covenant Worship. And he would teach it to the people. He would teach them how they could be a blessed people by speaking to them about God’s gracious goodness in relation to their keeping the commandments of the law.)

**Jeremiah 6: 16 & 17** – “Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you find rest for your souls.’” “But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” “Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen.’”

This is what the scribe is called to do. He brings things forth that are old. He turns men back to everything that has been good from the past in the Scriptures and teaching so that men can profit from it. That is what a New Testament minister is called to do. He is to take things that are old from the paths of righteousness and holiness from the Old Testament and bring them to people’s remembrance. The paths were true and real even in Old Testament, Old Covenant times. Grace was applied retroactively, based upon Christ’s future purchase of redemption and grace, to men like Ezra to be able to teach the people about God’s grace and truth which would lead them to salvation if they would listen.

**Psalm 40: 1-4** – “I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.” “He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.” “He has put a new song in my mouth – praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.” “Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.”

This is the things that are new, even written here in the Old Testament. David had a new song in his heart. He had a song that he sung to God for His bringing him out of the pit of sin, and having been delivered from it. It was a song of praise to our God for all that He would do for him in the future, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though David did not know Christ’s name – Jesus, yet he wrote of what God would do for him through Christ a thousand years in the future. The Scribe brings forth things old and new.

### **Let’s think about his life and ministry for a few minutes.**

**Ezra 7: 6-10** – “This Ezra came up from Babylon; and he was skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given.” “The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.” “Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.” “And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.” “On the first day of the

first month he began his journey from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.” “The king granted him all his request according to the good hand of the Lord his God upon him.” “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.”

**Question # 4** – How did Ezra come to be a skilled scribe in the Law of the Moses?

**So, returning from the captivity in Babylon, God had prepared a skilled scribe**, both to seek the Law of the Lord and to do it. It says here that Ezra had come back to Jerusalem to reestablish the worship of God for the people coming back from the captivity. The words, “according to the good hand of his God upon him are stated twice in verses 6, 9. What can we conclude from that? We can conclude that God had providentially raised up Ezra to this good work of being a scribe, and He intended to use him mightily as a scribe to teach the people everything that they needed to know, to reestablish the worship of God, so that God would be honored and glorified, and the people would be blessed in and by his instruction.

**Question # 5** - What good purpose did God have in bringing Ezra back from captivity in Babylon, to Jerusalem?

**Question # 6** – How would this purpose be accomplished?

**b. But there was, in Ezra, also, a good response to all that God had called him to do**, in his being a scribe. **In verse 10** it says that he had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord and to do it.

**Question # 7** – What does it mean that Ezra prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord to do it? (verse 10)

**Question # 8** – What should our response be, to what God has called us in do to be His faithful followers? What are the specific things that he did which are listed in verse 10?

**Question # 9** - Is this something that a New Testament scribe, a man who would be a pastor of God’s people ought to do as well?

**3. Ezra brought forth things out of the treasure of his heart, to the people of his day.**

**Luke 6: 43-45** – “For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.” “For every tree is known by its own fruit.” “For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush.” “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil.” “For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

**Today’s Lesson:**

**To prepare your heart, as a householder minister, you must not only read the Scriptures, but you must also seek to do what they say.**

**a. For the New Testament minister and all believers in Christ, this means putting away sin and becoming a doer of the word.**

**James 1: 21-25** – “Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who

forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.”

**Question # 10** – What does it mean to look into the perfect law, the law of liberty? What is this law and what will it mean to persevere in it?

**b. He studied the Law of the Lord. He prepared his heart to seek it.** This means that he prayed to God to understand the Scriptures, and asked God to help him to treasure it in his heart. He made the book of the Law of the Lord his chief preoccupation. He study the Old Testament Scriptures that he had, diligently. And he would teach all of the statutes and ordinances of it to Israel. He would teach all things that God had commanded the people of Israel through the Law of Moses. He was a fulfillment of Matthew chapter 12, verse 35 –

**Matthew 12: 35** – “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things...”

**Question # 11** – What is the good treasure of a man’s heart?

**Joseph Benson says** – “Thus, in the New Testament, the scribes were those who instructed the people in the law. It is said he was a ready scribe, because he was expert in the law, and understood it thoroughly, both in all things belonging to the priesthood, and to the civil power; in which he was so well versed, that he could give a ready account of any part of it. The Jews say, he collected and collated all the copies of the law, and published an accurate edition of it, with all the books that were given by divine inspiration, and so made up the canon of the Old Testament. Moses in Egypt, and Ezra in Babylon, were wonderfully fitted for eminent service in the church.”

**c. Ezra taught the people how to be reverent in their worship, but also to see the joy of the Lord as their strength.**

**Nehemiah 8: 1-12** – “And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.” And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.”

**d. Reverence to God in public worship was something that was taught by example, by Ezra, to the people.**

He stood on a wooden platform above them, he opened the book with great solemnity, All the people stood when it was read. He blessed the people in the name of the Lord the great God, and all the people answered responsively – Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. 13 chosen men of the Levites who were up on the platform with Ezra helped the people to understand the Law. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the wording.

**Question # 12** – What are some of the specifics of reverence in public worship that were taught by Ezra to the people in these verses? (There are many)

**4. The Scribes who Jesus taught and sent**

**a. The scribe that Jesus is talking about here is the evangelical scribe**, a man who has believed in the Lord Jesus and is following Him. In the case of this Parable they were, apostles and disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ who took down His words and wrote the books of the New Testament Scriptures that we have in our hands today.

**Matthew 23: 34-36** – “Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”

**Question # 13** – What was the reaction of the unbelieving Jews to Jesus sending them these N.T. scribes?

**b. The Scribe that Jesus is talking about is a minister of the word of God.** He would be, or is, a pastor or regular minister of the word of God. He is a man who is like the master of a household. In this case, overseeing the house of God, in a local church. This scribe in the kingdom of heaven has a treasure of wisdom and knowledge coming from his study of the Scriptures, and his experience in living the Christian life. He can explain many good things about this kingdom, both new and old to all of his household.

**Matthew 24: 45-47** – “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, (**a faithful and wise steward in Luke 12: 42**) whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them their food in due season?” “Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.” “Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.” (**Ruler over all he has, it says in Luke 12: 42**)

**c. So what the object is, in being a minister, or a pastor, is to be a faithful and a wise servant or steward of the Lord Jesus.**

**Question # 14** – When it says “whom his master made ruler over his household, who is the household and what is the food that they are given?”

**Question # 15** – What does it mean to give them their food in due season?

It is Christ who calls and raises up men to the ministry, to have them teach and to explain the word of God, and to give the people in the church their spiritual food, the right food at the right time. In this sense he is

a servant and a steward. He has been entrusted with overseeing and administering his Master's goods (in this case – the good word of God) and ruling over his household in his absence. This is – shepherding and taking care of the flock of God. He is entrusted with the authority to administer church discipline to those members who continue in open sin and will not repent, and he will seek to commend all of those members who are doing good things in the church, promoting Christ's kingdom and His glory.

In relation to the teaching and preaching of the word, he will seek to bring forth an accurate exposition of the text of Scripture, and what it is saying. He will rightly divide the word of truth and make good applications of what those sitting under his ministry should do in response to the truth. In his ruling and governing of the household, he will seek to be a loving, patient, and kind overseer, and pastor to the people, and a faithful undershepherd to rightly represent Christ to them.

**Question # 16** – What will his reward be if he is a faithful man?

When Christ returns there will be an evaluation of that man and his ministry as to whether he was faithful in ministering to the people, the word of God and being a faithful example to them of the believer. And faithful also, as Christ's servant, to help the people to live out the truth which he preaches to them. If he is faithful, there will be a reward. The reward will be his being made ruler over all the Lord's goods.