

I am Come

By David Simpson

Bible Text: Luke 12:49-53
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Eager Ave. Grace Church
1102 Eager Drive
Albany, GA 31707

Website: <http://www.rofgrace.com/>
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/reignofgrace

I want you to think with me about something in this 12th chapter and for those of you who are interested but were not here in the first hour, I brought an overview of the whole chapter and you might want to ask for a copy of that so that you can kind of fit this together. I want us to look how this morning in this second hour, at one particular passage. A very sobering passage of Scripture beginning with verse 49.

Jesus said, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."

If I declare the gospel and I say that the grace of God has to do with his gracious act from before the foundation of the world, to choose a people out of all of the human race that he might save from their sins, that he might justify them before his eyes, that he might take them to a final and ultimate glory to live with him. And if I say that the grace of God has to do with the finished work of Christ at the cross, whereupon the cross he not only made it possible, but he actually completed the work and actually saved and forgave and redeemed and reconciled and justified all those whom God elected from before the foundation of the world. And if I say the grace of God has to do with the act of God in the heart, in time, to reveal the truth of what he did in eternity and at the cross so that we might have peace, we might have rest, we might have comfort. That faith is not that which appropriates what he has done for us but it is the gift of God to see what he has done for us. Someone might listen to those words and they might say, "Well, that is your interpretation." I would say, "Yes, that is my interpretation." But I would further say to you that interpreting is the most important thing we do in all of this world. It really is. It's the most important thing we do. Jesus referred to those who do not discern in verse 56 as pretenders, as hypocrites, as actors. To fail to discern and evaluate the truth from error, religion from the true faith, that is hypocrisy.

Discerning is the most important thing we do. You'll notice up here in the parable that just precedes this particular passage of Scripture, our Lord said of the faithful servant in verse 43, that he shall find so doing. What is the most important thing that a faithful

servant does? The most important thing? He interprets. He divides. He looks at that which is truth and he says, "This is truth, this is error. No, this is error, this is truth. This is conditioned on something man does, this is conditioned on what God has done." He discerns. We must all be discerners. That is what we are called upon to do. So, it is the most vital thing that we are to be about is this matter of discerning. But there is something that we are to discern that is revealed to us in this passage that is more important than every other matter.

I'm not much of a mathematician, not at all. I can add a little bit, subtract a little bit, divide when I have to. I have a hard time when it comes to fractions. I didn't understand the word problems they gave to us in school. I'm not much of a mathematician. But I appreciate those who have figured out these mathematical equations and have been able to formulate things so that it can help us in terms of medicine, help us to go out into space and help us build buildings and all other matters of things that are important. But even if a man can discern all of those things but he doesn't know truth from error, all he is is a mathematician. But a man who is able to discern truth from error, a man who is able to look at the gospel and say, "This is the gospel," and be accurate about the gospel, now that is the most important thing in all of life.

Now, the message I want to present to you that actually the Lord brings to us is a heart rending message. It's a sobering message. It's the message that is hurtful if you please because do we not all want peace? Do we all not want to get along? Do we all not want peace in our homes? Of course we do but what our Lord says is, there's going to be division in the home. There's going to be division between father and son and mother and daughter and between the extended family. There's going to be division. Over what is it justified for us to divide? Our Lord said there's going to be division. He said, "I'm come for division." Over what is it justified for us to divide?

Look with me at this passage and I think you will see. He said in verse 49, "I am come. I am come from heaven to earth. I am come with a purpose. I am come with specific goals. I am come to accomplish something. I am come for a definite people. I am come. It was prophesied that I would be here and now I'm come. It was typified that I would be here and now I am come."

The sweet Jesus boy that is spoken of in religion is not found in this verse. You're just not going to be able to find him. What does he say? "I am come to send fire." What is fire? Fire is judgment. And he says, "I am come to send fire on the earth." What does he mean? Among men when he says "on the earth." "I am come to send fire upon this earth in judgment upon this earth among men." What about health and wealth and happiness and a long life? No, sir. "I am come to send fire on the earth among men." And then he asks a question, "What will I, if it be already kindled?" He says in essence to them, "What will I do if it's already kindled? What am I about if it's already kindled?" In other words, the purpose of my coming is judgment. And it's already kindled.

Look back with me to the gospel according to Matthew, the third chapter. Pretty straightforward passage of Scripture here concerning John the Baptist and our Lord.

Here's what John says, Matthew 3:10, "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees." This is a parable like saying, it's a picture of judgment. "Axe laid to the root of the tree." You're going to kill it. "Therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit," and that word "and" I think is better translated "even," "even fire." Or it could be translated Holy Spirit or fire. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

John says our Lord came for the purpose of judgment and for fire upon this earth. And our Lord says that it is already kindled. He is saying that judgment is imminent. Judgment is unavoidable. Judgment is upon Israel, in particular, upon the Pharisees. Judgment I say to you is in this age. You remember our study of the parables in the 13th chapter of Luke where he spoke of the parable of the tares. Remember what that parable concerned? It was the presence of false religion. Then he gave a parable of the mustard seed. Do you remember what that was? It was the parable that concerned the abnormal growth of false religion. And then he gave the parable of leaven and it was the parable of the corruption of false religion. And then he spoke of the judgment that was already existent but he said that the judgment is also future because in the 40th verse of the 13th chapter he said, "Therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be also in the end of the world." So, what he's saying is that there is present judgment and there is future judgment.

Jesus also said in Matthew 25, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The Bible says much more about judgment and the place of judgment than it does about heaven. We would rather talk about heaven, think about heaven. I'd rather encourage you to heaven but I want you to know that there is a devil to escape and there is a hell to shun and our Lord says, "I am come to send fire upon the earth." Even though there is the presence of judgment in this world even now and will be until the end, there is a worse judgment yet to come. So, I say with the kindest words I know how to speak to you, with the gentlest way I can, our Lord came for judgment and there is a judgment that is coming at the end of this age.

Then in verse 50 he uses what I always regard as the biggest little word in all of the Bible, "but." In other words, there's a judgment that is coming, "I've come for judgment, make no mistake. But," and if you can understand what he's talking about in verse 50, you are a blessed individual. You have hope. You can have confidence. You can have comfort. You can escape this devil and you can escape this judgment.

"But I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." He's not talking about his earthly baptism, is he? Because he's already been baptized by the John the Baptist. This is on in the progress of his 3 ½ years of ministry and he says, "I have a baptism," in the future, "to be baptized with." The word "baptize" is the word "baptizo" in the original language and it is transliterated into our language, therefore, carrying over the same sound, baptizo/baptize.

The word “baptize” means to merge. When I leave here today, I will drive to Columbus and I will merge onto the highway. I’ll go out onto the highway and I’ll become one with the traffic that is heading north and east. And I’ll make my way and I’ll make several merges at various points with traffic that is going and I’ll become one with them. This word “baptize” means to merge. It also means to immerge, so it is an act of coming together. But it’s also a word that means to submerge, so it means to be brought under. So, it’s submerge with, it’s to immerge, become one with and it’s to submerge, to be brought under. It’s also a word that means to immerse. Like a ship that is immersed beneath the waves, or a man who is so immersed in drink that he becomes drunk. Or a scholar who is immersed in his studies. Or a woman who is immersed in her trials and troubles of life. Or as here, it is a man who is immersed in his mission, that’s what he’s talking about. His mission. “I am come.”

Clearly baptism is not sprinkling. It’s impossible to have a biblical view of baptism and it be sprinkling. That’s impossible. There is no such thing in the Bible whatsoever. Nor is it of a passive infant or of an easily persuaded child. That is not baptism. It cannot be. Baptism concerns completeness. I become completely a part of the traffic when I merge with the other traffic. I become completely part of the water when I am immersed in the water. The person truly being baptized has an understanding mind. He knows what he’s doing. He has settled affections toward that which his mind is fixed upon. And he has a determined will that this is what I need to do, this is what I ought to do. I believe something. I’m going to identify with it.

When John the Baptist spoke of baptism, he spoke of it as first being agreeable with baptism as repentance and faith. Can an infant repent? Can a small child actually repent? Do they understand the gravity of their sin and their state before God? Can they understand the matter of law and legal satisfaction? Oh, let us be careful. Do not pressure small children. They cannot do what you ask them to do though they will agree to do almost anything you want them to do.

Baptism has to do with a mind and an affection and a will that is fixed in a certain way. The person who is truly baptized has a consciousness of his moral corruption and of his spiritual inability. He becomes submissive to baptism. A believer is baptized denying himself and confessing the gospel of free grace conditioned on Christ alone. In true baptism, the whole person is immersed into the water from the bottom of his feet to the very last hair on the top of his head is immersed in water. Where the mind says go, the body goes. Where the body goes, the mind is present.

Baptismal waters are consuming, they are abundant, they are encapsulating. The person baptized is plunged into the water and his covered in the water. The person becomes one with the water. He is inseparable from the water and the water is inseparable from him. That’s baptism. That’s baptism. Christ was baptized. Christ was baptized and his baptism physically upon this earth showed something about himself and that is that he became submissive to the hand of a sinner so he could identify with sinners.

Turn with me to the book of Romans, chapter 6. His physical baptism upon this earth was an identification with sinners. But the baptism that he's talking about superceded that, it goes beyond that, fulfills that. Look what he said in Romans 6:3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" How were we baptized into Christ? We were baptized into Christ by union with him in his death. We were placed in him as a sovereign act of God. God viewed those he chose from the foundation of the world as being in Christ Jesus the Lord. Baptism here is union with him. It's one with him. It's the completeness in him. Just like a man immersed in water.

But this is not water baptism, this is the death of Christ. This is the suffering of Christ. This is his identification with sin and when he died, look what happened in verse 4, "Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death." This is not his earthly baptism, nor our earthly baptism. This is his baptism in suffering and death. And then here is the result in verse 7, "For he that is dead is freed," and that word "freed" is "justified," "from sin."

So complete, so complete was the identification of Christ with sinners. So complete was his baptism into death that death died. Now, think about it. Death died. He brought an end to death. He brought an end to death for his people. And those who died with him are now justified. That's the declaration of that verse. When he died and when we died with him, we were also in the same act justified from all guilt and from all wrong.

John the Baptist was startled that the Lord would want to be baptized of him and Matthew says that he forbade him. Can you imagine? A man forbidding God? Can you imagine this man John the Baptist who said, "I'm not worthy to hold his sandals or to latch his sandals together. Who am I?" But he tried to forbid him. "No, no, you can't do this, you shouldn't do this." Aw, but he should. He could. He had to, that's the reason that he came. He came in order to picture it, his identification with sinners and then to fulfill it in time. Like all things under the old covenant it was a picture and a type but his identification was centered in its completeness is the completeness of what he accomplished in his death and his suffering. And so complete was it that those who are in him all their judgment was put away and they were justified.

Now, everything that he did in this world was as a substitute. From the cradle to the grave it was as a substitute. What was it the Apostle Paul said? "Though rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." In heaven, he came to earth for one purpose and it was to be a substitute. It was to be a substitute. What do the angels say? "Call his name Jesus," Savior, Joshua. Joshua is a picture, he is the fulfillment. "Call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins."

The Psalmist recorded in prophecy, "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up." Our Lord was ready to die from his youth up. You and I are ready to live. We're always trying to live. When you're a teenager you're looking forward to the life that's in front of you. When you're a mother or a daddy you're looking forward to the life that's in front of you. Now that some of us are growing towards the sunset of life, we're still doing our best to live. But the Lord said, "I'm ready to die from my youth up."

Isaiah wrote that he has surely borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Both John and Matthew recorded Jesus as saying, "Now is my soul troubled. And my soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death." On the cross, the sin bearing substitute became a substitute for us and the gospel is summarized by Paul for what took place on that cross saying, "For he was made sin for us." That's exactly what he was identified with was sin for us.

Paul also said in Galatians 3, that "he has redeemed us from the curse of the law." How? By being made a curse for us. Ephesians 2 says that "he's given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God." We don't give offerings. We don't give offerings. We give gifts. He made the offering. He made the sacrifice. All we do is give back a portion of what he has given to us. He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.

Peter said, "Who in his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." That's when and where and how our sins were borne to their completion in his body on the tree. He's not bearing sin anymore because he's not on the tree. Did you ever think of that? He bore sins and bore them to their exhaustion in his body on the tree but then he resurrected out of the grave, he ascended up into heaven and he reigns in heaven on the ground of what he accomplished up on the cross. And what he did up on the cross he did without sin.

Scripture says in Luke 1:35, it refers to him as "that holy thing that is born of thee." Mary wasn't holy but the holy thing that was in her was the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There's only one who is holy and that is God. God was in her. How in this world can we wrap our minds around the fact that while he was in the womb of Mary he ruled the world with his own hand? But he did. Because he is God.

The Scripture says in Isaiah that he "has done no violence and neither is there any deceit in his mouth." You and me, we're always struggling to keep it honest, to keep it straight, to keep it right, to do what's right. But him, in his heart he never struggled with doing what was right. Peter referred to him as a lamb when he died. As "a lamb without blemish and without spot." The writer of Hebrews said that he was "holy and harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Separate from sinners. Now, he identified with sin but he was separate from sinners.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says "he knew no sin." 1 Peter 2:22 says "he did no sin." 1 John 3:5 says "in him is no sin." While many have erred at this point, we know what a shocking thing that men would refer to Jesus as having to be a sinner in order to bear sin. No, the Bible tells us how he did it. If you'll turn over a few pages in Luke to chapter 22. We're told exactly how he bore our sin to completion. Here's a quotation from Isaiah 53:12, Luke 22:37, the middle of the verse it says, "He was reckoned," do you see it there? "He was reckoned among the transgressors." Do you know what that word "reckoned" is? Logizomai, don't you wish you could say that? Logizomai is the word for reckon, impute, account. He was accounted to be among sinners but he wasn't a sinner.

Sin was imputed to him so that when men looked upon him, he may have looked like a sinner but not in the eyes of God. Any man who looks upon him as a sinner does not look upon him as God does. A man who does, does not see the gospel. He does not see the nature of what Christ accomplished upon this earth. He does not understand the baptism that he came to be baptized with.

So complete was this imputation, so complete was this reckoning that there was no sin to be borne anymore. As in this baptism, as you cannot be separated from the water, he become inseparable from the sin he bore. True enough. But he did it without becoming a sinner. No rebellion in his heart, no will against God, that would be impossible. How could the just die for the unjust if he were a sinner? It would be the unjust trying to die for the unjust. That would not work. How was it done? It was done by imputation and so complete was it that he bore it to its very exhaustion. No sin to be held anymore. How could God lay sin upon him and he bear it to its exhaustion and me still be charged with sin if I'm chosen from the foundation of the world? That's impossible.

Look what he says back in our text. "I have a baptism to be baptized with." This baptism he's talking about I declare to you is his death, is his suffering, is his substitution. It's what he did upon the cross. Everything in his life moved toward it. Now, he says, "How am I straitened." That's not a word we use like that. It's a word that means compel. I have a word that's translated here in my Bible that is translated as "pain," I'm pained. "I'm compelled, I'm pained. I cannot escape it until it be accomplished." What do you think that word "accomplished" is? Remember when Jesus said, "It is finished?" That's this word. "Until it be accomplished."

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and I'm compelled toward it, I'm pained toward it. I cannot escape it until it be accomplished." Now, the question is, what did he accomplish? Most of religion is telling you that he accomplished for you an opportunity. He accomplished for you a chance. And if you will do whatever they tell you to do. Some say light candles, some say get sprinkled, some say go down into the water, some say keep this, some say just believe. Whatever they tell you to do, that's what they say he accomplished. An opportunity. But do you know what the Scriptures say? The Scriptures say Christ was delivered because of our offenses. And he was raised again because of our justification. He wasn't delivered in order for us to commit offenses, it was because we had already committed offenses. He wasn't raised again in order for us to be justified. He was raised again because we were justified.

Then it goes on to say, "Having therefore been justified by faith we have peace toward God." What did he accomplish? He accomplished an actual removal of guilt. An actual righteousness that God reckoned to his people so he could look upon them with eyes of peace and therefore we could look toward him with eyes of peace. And that's what we do with faith. We look toward him with eyes of peace. In type and symbol and direct revelation the Scriptures declare God acting as the judge of the universe. Look upon the single obedience of Christ, towards those who were in him in his death from the foundation of the world in order for them to be justified in the act of Christ's baptism. His full identification with sin and with sinners and before he left the cross, the chosen were

forgiven and redeemed and justified and reconciled in the eyes of the Almighty God. "Well, that's your interpretation." I say to you it is. I stand upon it. I'm not ashamed of it. I'm glad about it.

What occurred in Christ's blood in the sacrifice is a watershed. You know what a watershed is don't you? Water falls on top of a ridge and some of it goes this way and some of it goes that way, that's a watershed. And your interpretation of what happened in Christ's baptism is a watershed. Now, you can't help it. You can try to avoid it. You say, "I'm not going to think about it." But as soon as you do, you fall in on one side of the watershed. It is a watershed.

The truth that I have declared to you, the truth that is in the Scriptures, is foreign to the thinking of men. People you know, people I know, people I work with, people I serve. It's foreign to them because what they want to know is what must I do? But this watershed goes all the way back to the beginning. That's why there was a Cain and there was an Abel because the removal of sin by a blood sacrifice and that alone, was not enough for Cain. And when God looked upon Abel's sacrifice and accepted it, Cain became so angry he said, "I'll have your life for that." Those who are out in the world of religion, if we are big enough that we cause trouble, that's what they're going to do with us.

I say to you that it's a watershed. Why do I say that? Because in verse 51, "Suppose you that I am come to give peace on the earth?" That's what they're telling you down at the First Baptist and the First Methodist and the First Presbyterian and ones that go under the name of grace, they're telling you that he came to bring peace upon the earth. But he says, "I tell you," in verse 51, now look with your own eyes, it's not just me, "I tell you, Nay, but rather division. What I accomplished in my baptism or will accomplish in my baptism will bring division." And it'll bring it in the worst place that any of us would want.

Verse 52, "For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." Why does the Lord go to that? What does he say all those things? Why couldn't he just stop? Because he wanted to make his point clear. "What I will accomplish in my death is a watershed." And division is inevitable. We'd all prefer peace. I'd rather be able to get along with everybody in the religious world, I really would. But I can't. I just can't.

There is a time to discern. The history of the church is replete with separation over trivial and insignificant matters. I work with a lady that goes to a Southern Baptist church and they have a big Christmas program every year. They're having some difficulty putting on their big Christmas program and so they're having to move their practices to Sunday night. And on Sunday night is when the Praise Team met, although I'm not sure what the Praise Team is exactly. The Praise Team met on Sunday night and so the Praise Team

became aggravated with the Christmas program people and they had a division. Now that's true. That's true. That's insignificant.

But this is not trivial, this is not insignificant. This is foundation. This is bedrock. This is vital. The announcement of the gospel is a declaration of sin put away and God's people justified. God told Isaiah to go and tell the church her warfare is accomplished. Her iniquity is pardoned. So, that's what I come declaring to you this morning. I don't come offering to you an invitation to do anything. I come declaring to you that God's people's sin has been put away and his people are justified and pardoned.

Faith is the gift of God to see, understand, rest, find comfort in that which Christ accomplished in his baptism 2,000 years ago. It is my prayer that God would give us hearts full of peace and rest. May our fellowship, yours and mine, your congregation and the congregation I serve, always be of a kindred spirit toward that finished work of Jesus Christ as the sin bearing substitute. That is the only ground I discern before you this morning. That is the only ground of fellowship for God's people.

Let's pray together.

Our generous and gracious Father, would you bless the Word that you've given to us this morning to our poor feeble hearts.