

The Axe to the Root of the Trees

Matthew 3:7-12

We've been going through Matthew Chapter 3 verse by verse. Last week we focused in on what John the Baptist meant when he preached to "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." We know he was talking about the fruit of your lips.

When we go out and preach the Gospel, much like John the Baptist was doing there, we ask people if they believe what we're telling them from the Bible. They will say "Yes, I believe that" or "No, I don't believe that."

""Matthew 3:7-9

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.""

John the Baptist Calls Them Vipers

John the Baptist saw the Pharisees and Sadducees, or the very religious people who thought they were good, and he calls them vipers. It would be similar to the Catholics who believe they are good and their goodness is what's getting them to heaven. It would be similar to Old Apostolic Lutherans, Mormons, and Seventh Day Adventists who believe themselves to be good.

When we go out to preach the Gospel to those people, as an example, older Catholics are the nastiest and most rude people that you'll ever run into. They hate us because we preach faith in Jesus to be saved. They think they are so great that they don't need to put their faith "IN" Jesus.

They are vipers. Anyone who argues a works based salvation, good works to get to heaven, good works to earn heaven, is a viper. They are just like the Pharisees and Sadducees.

John the Baptist says to bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance or a change of mind. What John the Baptist is preaching is different than what they believe so John the Baptist is preaching for them to change their mind or repent and believe what he's telling them.

He says to bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. When someone won't believe the Scriptures, I'll show them a few more Scriptures and ask if they believe what I'm telling them now.

If not, they aren't bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. The fruit of their lips is telling me they don't believe it. They say, "No, I don't believe that." I say, "So you don't believe God's

words." They say, "No, I don't believe that." They aren't changing their mind. That's not good. They are calling God a liar. Not good.

God Can Raise Anyone Up

In verse 9, John says: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able to of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

The very religious people believe that God needs them. But they're wrong. It's the other way around. We need God. We need Jesus to save us. We aren't good enough for heaven. Jesus must save you.

When John the Baptist says, "fruits meet for repentance" he means the fruit of their lips or the words coming out of their mouth and their heart. This is Jesus speaking to the same people who thought they were good.

""Matthew 12:34-35

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.""

Speak good things. For example, if I asked you: "Do you believe that Jesus Christ on His own, without your help, without your good works, do you believe that Jesus can save you from all your sins right now and forever?"

If you believe that, and you say "Yes, I do." That's fruit meet for repentance. You've changed your mind. You previously thought it was doing good works. But now you believe Jesus did all the work to save you. So you believe "IN" Jesus and not "IN" yourself. That's the good fruit of your lips.

""Hebrews 13:15

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.""

Fruits Meet For Repentance Come From Your Heart and Mouth

Fruits meet for repentance is what comes out of your mouth. It's your thoughts coming out of your heart. Do you believe in Jesus Christ or not?

With that foundation, there's another Scripture here that is taught wrong over and over again in verse 10 of Matthew Chapter 3. We're going to focus on that Scripture today for this Sunday School lesson.

Keep in mind this is right after John the Baptist tells them to bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance and to not believe they are good because they physically came from Abraham.

""**Matthew 3:10**

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.""

So, we just talked about the fruit. John the Baptist wasn't preaching for the Pharisees and Sadducees to go do good works before they could change their mind and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The fruit here is what's coming out of their heart and their mouth.

What does that verse say exactly? "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees." We see an axe here and we see it being laid to the actual root of the trees. For example, I've done a good amount of landscaping in my life. I've planted many trees. I've taken many trees out. I've taken many large bushes and trees completely out of the ground.

You Must Cut The Tree at the Root

If you don't cut a tree at a root, it's still there and it may keep growing. If you want to get completely rid of the tree, you must take it out by the roots and all. Everything must be gone. This axe in this Scripture is being taken to the root of the trees. Who are the trees? John the Baptist is comparing people to trees.

""**Psalm 1:1-3**

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.""

""**Jeremiah 17:8**

For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.""

John the Baptist is comparing men with trees.

For example, we bring the word of God to people out there in this community. The seed is the word of God. The tree that you have growing right now. Is it a good tree or is it a corrupt tree? Did you receive the word of God with joy and gladness? Or did you reject that good seed?

If you received that good seed, the word of God, it sprouted into a good tree. It's a good tree from the very root. And it's on good ground because you're here and increasing the word of God in your life.

Bad Trees Will Be Axed Down

But think about the people with trees based on false religion and based on the lies of this world. Some will say, "Well, I'm a spiritual person. I don't really believe the Bible." These halfway houses that are out there who believe themselves to be doing good will say these things. "We're spiritual." These are bad trees. You don't want that tree. That's growing a corrupted tree.

They are not spiritual at all because they do not have the Spirit of God. They are of the flesh. What's going to happen to those trees that are compared to people? John the Baptist, through the Holy Spirit of God, tells us the truth.

""Matthew 3:10

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.""

We just talked about the fruit of your lips that tell us if you have believed in Jesus Christ. If the fruit of your lips is not good and you are not believing in Jesus Christ, that axe right there will be laid unto the root of the trees. All of you is going away for a very long time.

If you don't believe in Jesus Christ, you will be hewn down, and cast into the fire. John the Baptist preached to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to receive remission of sins. Here's what John the Baptist preached exactly.

""John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.""

John the Baptist said that if you don't change your mind and believe in Jesus Christ only, you will be hewn down and cast into the fire.

""Matthew 3:10-11

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 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 Ghost, and with fire:""

Baptized With the Holy Ghost

If you have repented (a change of mind) and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, John would baptize. And then John the Baptist says, "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 Ghost, and with fire."

He speaks of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is coming after John the Baptist. Jesus will either baptize with the Holy Ghost or with fire. And there is a colon at the end of verse 11 there. This means the thought is continuing and the next verse is going to clarify what he means exactly.

What does John the Baptist mean when he says that Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire? There are arguments over this verse too. But verse 12 explains it to us. Does the fire mentioned right there in verse 11 mean hell fire? Let's see. Let's put both verses together and read them.

""Matthew 3:11-12

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 Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.""

So, now we know what he means. There's two groups of people here in verse 12. There's the wheat. And then there's the chaff. A fan separates the good stuff from the bad stuff. Jesus is going to separate good from the bad. The bad trees will be axed down and thrown into the fire.

The Fruit of Your Lips Better Mean Repentance

If you're a tree and the fruit of your lips, the fruit coming out of the abundance of your heart, was never good, you will be burned up with unquenchable fire. The fire will never stop. If you won't trust God's words, and you call God a liar your whole life, the result, and it's well deserved, is unquenchable fire.

Jesus said this about John the Baptist, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

And John the Baptist said this about Jesus Christ: "But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." Hey, Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Hey, trust me, you want the Holy Ghost. You don't want the fire. You don't want the unquenchable fire. There's your choice. Heaven or hell. That's the only two destinations. There are no others.

People out there will say, "Well, I don't believe in heaven and hell. I'm going to come back as a butterfly." Foolishness. "Well, I don't believe in hell. My god wouldn't create such a place like that." Foolishness.

There is a heaven. There is a hell. Reincarnation doesn't exist. That's a fairy tale. Purgatory and getting prayed out of there is a fairy tale. The Bible says nothing like that. A man such as the pope can make up whatever he wants but it doesn't mean it's true. There is no such place as purgatory.

Purgatory is similar to Big Foot or Batman or Superman. They don't exist. They are just something that the imagination of men created. Heaven and hell is not a fairy tale. God created heaven and hell. They are real.

It doesn't matter what you think or what you believe. It's there. You can believe what you want, but you can't change reality.

For example, men out there believe themselves to be women. They say, "My pronouns are she and her." But they're still a man. It's a HE. Women out there believe themselves to be men. "My pronouns are he and his." Still a woman. It's a SHE.

You can believe what you want, but truth is truth. Lies are lies. God tells you the truth. If He didn't, no one would be here right now.

Heaven or Hell Are the Only Destinations

Heaven is there. Hell is there. You get to go to one of those. There is no middle ground. There is no other option.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost that seals your soul forever. You are baptized with the Ghost. Your soul is signed, sealed, and delivered. Your place in heaven is reserved by the Holy Ghost.

""Ephesians 1:13

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,""

Or, you can choose to hate God, never believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and spend all of eternity in the unquenchable fire of hell. It is never quenched. It never goes out.

Revelation 14:11 says the smoke of their TORMENT ascendeth up for ever and ever. They have no rest day or night.

""Revelation 14:10-11

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.""

We see John the Baptist preaching the same thing here in Matthew Chapter 3. He says, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees." It's all going down. Nothing is left. The tree, the root, everything.

Jesus Axes Down the Bad Trees and Burns Them Forever

"Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Jesus will THOROUGHLY purge his floor. He'll keep the people who have believed in him and the rest he will burn up with unquenchable fire. And this is the truth.

Make sure you are on the right side of that today. And you can be. We'll give you the Gospel today, and you can tell us if you believe what God says right here in His words. If you simply believe God, He'll save you today and give you everlasting life.

You won't have to worry about that unquenchable fire. You won't have to worry about that penalty that we all owe which is death and hell.

Let's pray.