Misunderstood, Yet Understanding

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[0:00] Good morning. There is a repeated legend.

! It didn't really happen, but it's a legend of the time when, after the resurrection of Jesus, Satan gathered his demons together and held a council of demons.
And they convened to discuss and discover what would be the best way to get people to not believe in the truth of the gospel.
And so they met for a period of time and they broke up into different groups of demons and each group came up with their different version of how to best combat the idea that the gospel is true.
And so the first group, when they got together and Satan asked the question, the first group of demons decided that the best way to deceive people into believing that the gospel wasn't true was to do just that.
[1:16] Just convince them that it's not true, that Jesus isn't real, that he didn't rise again from the dead, and it's all just a lie. And Satan considered that and like, okay, that might work for some people, but let's discover what else we've got.

And so the second group of demons piped up and they said, okay, we're going to say that it's true, but that we're also going to say that other religions also have truth.
And so that Christianity is just one of a number of ways that people can reach heaven. And they thought, okay, that sounds pretty good too.
And so we'll include that in the mix. And then the third group gave their report and they said, well, we believe that it's all true. And we're going to convince people that there is no other way that heaven and hell are real and that Jesus is the only way to eternal life.
And he is truly the son of God. But we're just going to convince them that they have plenty of time to make that decision. That there's no hurry.
[2:30] That the day of judgment is a long way off. And so we're going to distract people with just the everydayness of life and all the activities and everything that goes on.

And we'll convince them that they have plenty of time. What's the rush? No need to make a decision today. But we need to understand that the spirit of God counsels us differently.
2 Corinthians 6, verse 2, Behold, now is the favorable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. The Lord tells us something different about the time that we have available to us.
Hebrews 9, verse 27, It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment. And that we need to be prepared for that day and to not put it off.
Today we're going to be looking at a passage of Scripture at the end of Luke chapter 12, verses 49 through 59, that are really quite alarming statements that Jesus makes.
[3:40] And you won't often hear preachers talk about this unless a pastor is preaching through books of the Bible. And even then, sometimes they will hopscotch right over a passage like this just because it's hard to deal with or it doesn't sound like Jesus.

Some of the statements that we're going to read today that come from Jesus are going to be statements that a lot of folks would say, I don't know if Jesus would say that. But he actually did.
And so it's good for us to know what he means by it and what he says by it. And let's just dig right in and look at this first statement that he makes. I came to cast fire on the earth.
And would that it were already kindled. What? What? What does Jesus mean by this? And I think it would be best for us to really understand the context of fire, the subject of fire and how often it's brought up in Scripture and generally what fire is all about in the Scriptures.
And so let's dig in by looking at this, that number one, looking at this first statement, that Jesus promised a future fire on the earth even to the point of saying, boy, I kind of wish it was already started.

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[5:10] I wish it was already on fire. That's where I'm at with this. And this fire, as we should come to understand, is a reference to the coming of God's wrath in judgment.

And generally speaking, it's not always the case, but generally speaking, much of the time when you talk about fire, when you read about fire in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, it is talking about God's wrath.
It's talking about God's judgment. And so it's good for us to look at this. And one passage I'll highlight, and boy, I could have selected a bunch of these kinds of passages, but one from Amos 2, verses 4 and 5.
And I just want to highlight here, for three transgressions of Judah and for four, I will not revoke the punishment because they have rejected the law of the Lord. Skip down to the highlighted part.
So I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour strongholds of Jerusalem. When God speaks of fire, generally speaking, it is speaking of God's wrath and God's judgment.
[6:23] And so we don't often associate Jesus with God's wrath and God's judgment. Matter of fact, in John 3.16, we're familiar with that. John 3.17 tells us that Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through his sacrifice on the cross.

And that's true, but Jesus is also our coming judge. And that's a reference to what Jesus is referring to in this passage, this fire that he wants to be kindled.
And so on your notes now, just some general statements about fire in the Bible. Firstly, that fire is closely associated with the presence and the power of God.
And so you have statements like, for instance, Old Testament statement, 1 Chronicles 21, verse 26, David built there an altar to the Lord, presented burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord.
The Lord answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering. Even this fire from heaven on the burnt offering in the sacrifices is a picture of God's judgment on sin.
[7:36] It's why the offerings needed to be burnt. It pictured what God would do with our sin, that he would judge it and that he would eliminate it through fire from heaven.

But then you also have passages like this in the New Testament. This is from Acts chapter 2. Now this is on the day of Pentecost, where the apostles are together in Jerusalem in the upper room when the Holy Spirit descends on them for the first time.
And you have this, We're going to see just a moment that when Peter is preaching this message on the day of Pentecost, he's quoting from Joel chapter 2, which is also a statement of God's wrath and God's judgment at the second coming of Jesus.
But what we often don't see and we fail to understand is that the Old Testament prophets, when they looked at the coming of Jesus, they saw it as just the one event.
They didn't see two comings of Jesus. The first coming, his birth and his going to the cross and paying the penalty for our sins.
[9:03] They saw oftentimes those kinds of events intermingled with, which is true in the passage in Joel chapter 2, the second coming of Jesus, with him coming in splendor and glory and judgment and wrath and to execute his judgment on the earth.

And so a lot of times they get confused that way. And so that's why Peter, when he's preaching this message, he's quoting from Joel chapter 2, but he's only quoting the parts of the passage that reference events of the first coming of Jesus, and he's not quoting the parts talking about the second coming of Jesus.
And that's kind of what we're going to take a look at here next. Fire is often used symbolically, literally, or prophetically as an instrument of divine wrath exercised against all sinners, both Jew and Gentile.
It doesn't make a difference. God's wrath is going to be poured out equally on those. And here's this passage from Joel chapter 2. Blow a trumpet in Zion. Sound an alarm on my holy mountain.
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is near. That phrase, the day of the Lord, whenever you see that, both Old and New Testament, the day of the Lord, that is a reference to the second coming of Jesus.
[10:29] And all of the events that surround the second coming of Jesus, starting with the church being taken out of the way, and the tribulation where God's dealing specifically with Israel, the second coming, the second coming, all the events that lead up to his coming kingdom, and setting up the kingdom of God.

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All of that is a reference to the day of the Lord. So the day of the Lord is coming. It is near. A day of darkness and gloom. A day of clouds and thick darkness.
As he goes on, fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. Fire associated with the wrath of God, the second coming of Jesus.
It's all a part of that. Now this future fire of divine judgment is also closely linked with the coming, particularly the second coming of Jesus.
We see it referenced in 2 Peter, 2 Peter chapter 3, talking about the earth. I mentioned this a number of weeks ago. The reason why I'm not worried about global warming is because Jesus is going to destroy all of this with fire.
[11:44] And we're going to have a new heaven and a new earth anyway. So we don't have to worry about that. But the day of the Lord. This is now 2 Peter. So this is New Testament.

He's making reference to the day of the Lord. The second coming of Jesus. The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.
There's a reference there to Jesus destroying all the heavens and the earth that we know today, destroying them by fire, and then creating a new heaven and a new earth.
And then we will be on earth, heaven on earth. That will be our eternal state. And so that's what we have to look forward to.
But before we get there, there's going to be a lot of fire. And thankfully, we won't have to be in that fire as believers. We won't be a part of that. But unbelievers certainly will.
[12:45] Revelation chapter 20 talks about then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire in anyone's name. Not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This is talking about the great white throne judgment that all believers of all ages will have to stand before the Lord to give account of their life. And because they have rejected Christ as Savior, they will be then for all of eternity cast into what is known as the lake of fire.
And so fire is a part of God's wrath, God's judgment upon mankind. We see that over and over in the text.
And then one more thing that I want to highlight that sometimes there's some confusion about. At the outset of Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist came, and he spoke about the coming Messiah as bringing fire, particularly the Holy Spirit, that he would bring the Holy Spirit and fire.
And sometimes there's some misunderstanding about those two things and what that's all about. So I want to show you the Old Testament context of this first.
[14:01] The Old Testament prophecies talking about John the Baptist, the coming of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus, the one who would come before Jesus. Malachi chapter 3 verses 1 and 2, I will send my messenger, that's a reference to John the Baptist, who will prepare the way before me, but who can endure the day of his coming, who can stand when he appears, for he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.

Now again, this is Malachi, an Old Testament prophet, seeing the first coming and the second coming of Jesus as the same event. And so he doesn't distinguish, and none of the Old Testament prophets could.
The Old Testament prophets, none of them, you will not see anywhere in the Old Testament, you and I, the church. Church is completely hidden, and you won't find a reference to it, a suggestion for it anywhere.
There's no little Easter eggs of the church found somewhere buried in some text in the Old Testament. It is, the church is, what Paul refers to in the New Testament, is this mystery. Something that was hidden in the Old Testament, and that has now been revealed through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the uniting of Jew and Gentile into what we know today as the church, the New Testament church.
[15:31] And so when the Old Testament prophets saw the coming of Jesus, they saw it all as just as one event. And so as they're describing it, it looks like they're intermingling first coming and second coming events as the same thing, as does Malachi here.

It's not Malachi's fault. He's not misunderstanding it. It is because God chose for the church to remain hidden in the Old Testament. And then in the New Testament, now with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, comes this thing called the church that you and I are a part of.

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Okay? So, I will send my messenger. It's a reference to the first coming of Jesus and the messenger, John the Baptist, who would come to prepare the way before the Lord. And then, almost like right on top of it, second coming events.
Jesus who can endure the day of his coming, who can stand when he appears. So he will be like a refiner's fire or a fuller or a launderer's soap. That's a reference to the coming of John the Baptist. And then Jesus coming behind him, bringing fire at the second coming. So Malachi chapter 4 verse 1 says it this way, Surely the day is coming.
[16:48] It will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble. The day that is coming will set them on fire.

The day of the Lord. And at the day of the Lord, the second coming of Jesus, all of those events, there's coming a fire of God's wrath, of God's judgment.
Now, what's interesting is you come into the Gospels and you hear John the Baptist preaching. You see this in Luke chapter 3 verse 16.
We talked about this a number of months ago when we were back in chapter 3. John answered them all, John, are you the Messiah? Are you the one who is to come?
And John was like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. He answered them all saying, I baptize you with water. A different kind of baptism than what is our baptism, New Testament baptism.
[17:44] His was a baptism of repentance. But he who is mightier than I, he's referencing Jesus, is coming. The strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

And what? Fire. Now, here's where it gets a little perhaps confusing or sometimes people misunderstand. People talk about today, and it depends on which church you go to and the denominations that talk about this.
They will talk about, oh, I want to have that Holy Spirit baptism with fire. No, you don't. You really don't. Because if you're receiving baptism with fire, that means you're like immersed in fire.
I don't think you want that. I don't think you want to be immersed in fire. Well, it's just symbolic. And then I want to be on fire for God. You got to be careful about what you say, what you mean when you say something like that.
Because this particular reference to fire is the fire of God's judgment. Not like how we normally say being on fire for God, as in I'm really hot for the Lord, and I'm living for him, and I'm outspoken for him, and I'm just going to do everything for him.
[19:09] And we reference that as being on fire for God. Be careful. That's not what this is a reference to. Well, Rich, how can you say that?

How do you know? Because, as good Bible study students do, we read in context. The very next verse tells us about this fire.
His winnowing fork is in his hand. This is talking about Jesus. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor, to gather the wheat into his barn.
But the chaff, those who are saved, they're like the wheat that goes into the barn. But the chaff, he will burn with unquenchable fire.
The unsaved, he will burn with fire. And so when John says that Jesus is coming and he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, that's a reference to believers.
[20:06] Or he will baptize you with fire. That is a reference to unbelievers who will be judged and burn in the fires of judgment.

So we have to be careful about this. When Jesus is starting to talk about fire here, I want this fire to come, he says. And I wish that it was already kindled.
He's like, okay, I'm looking forward to that day when I come again. I know it's coming. I've got a job to do right now. I've set my face toward Jerusalem. I've headed toward the cross long term.
I'm coming again. I know that. I'm looking forward to that day. Can't wait for it to come, to be there. And then here's the second statement that Jesus makes.
He talks about this fire, how he wishes that it were already kindled. And then he says this. He wants to inform them now of an event that he can't wait to get past.
[21:13] He wants to reach this event. Yes, he does. But he wants to get there like, I want it to be over with.

I can't wait until it's in my past. What event is he talking about? And he says this. I have a baptism to be baptized with. Now, we're a Baptist church.

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And so we sometimes read this word baptism or baptize. And we automatically think, oh, well, he's talking about, I don't know, water baptism or something.
No, it had nothing to do with that. The word baptize, if you translate the word, it just means to immerse. He says, I'm going to be immersed in something. I know that it's coming.
I have an immersed thing that's going to happen that I will be immersed with. And how great is my distress until it's accomplished, until it happens.
[22:14] I can't wait for it to happen. I'm distressed until it happens. And what he's talking about here is a reference to the cross and what he's going to accomplish at the cross, what he's going to do at the cross.

He's going to be, in a very real sense here, immersed, baptized with the sin of all humanity when he goes to the cross.
He's going to be immersed in your sin and my sin to the point you have little references given under this point on your notes where Jesus is going to become sin for us.
Jesus is going to experience what it means to be separated from God because of sin. When Jesus is on the cross and he says, he cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
It is at that moment that he is experiencing the wrath of God upon himself. As bad as the cross was, as bad as the beatings and the crown of thorns and the nails through hands and feet, as bad as all of that was, that was nothing in comparison to him carrying the weight of our sin upon himself, being immersed into the sin of all humanity, your sin and my sin, when he died on the cross.
[23:51] He says, I've got a baptism that's coming to be baptized with. And oh, I want it to be done. I want it to be past tense.

I'm not looking forward to that. So this is a reference now to the cross. He's giving these hints of what is to come.
Judgment is coming. The cross is coming. And he's giving them these references to that. And now this third statement, which again is, does it make sense?
And yes, it does. Jesus warned them of something that the gospel would cause. All right? So let's read about this, something that the gospel is going to cause in our lives.
Okay? It was true back then. It's true today as well. Jesus, now how would you answer this question? Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth?
[24:59] How would you answer this question? Jesus is asking it. Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? Now we just come through the Christmas season, right? It's still fresh on our heels.

You know, some of you haven't even taken the Christmas decorations down yet. We still have them up here. We're not even done with the 12 days of Christmas yet, right? That's on Tuesday. What was the promise at Christmas?
What was it that the angels were proclaiming at Christmas? That he's going to bring peace on earth. And now Jesus is here saying, wait a minute.
Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? The answer to this question is not yet. Not yet. The first coming of Jesus, the offer is made.
They reject him. And so now we're going through this church age and there is no peace right now for us without Christ.
[26:04] Okay. Look at what he says. Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you. Rather, I have come to bring division.

Hmm. What kind of division? From now on in one house, there will be five divided. So he's talking about a household of five people. Okay.
Five people in that house divided. Three against two. Two against three. What's he talking about?
Two people who have trusted Christ as Savior.
Three who haven't. Or three who have trusted Christ and two that haven't. Within the same household. Anybody have that kind of experience? You kind of know what that's like?
That kind of thing? Right? People give testimony all the time about how their relationships with people in the church is more like family than what they experience in their own roof, under their own roof, with their own flesh and blood.
[27:15] They will be divided. Look at how he talks about this. Father against son. It's son against father. Mother against daughter. And daughter against mother. Mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law.

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And daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Wow. There's a lot of angst going on. Is that true today?
Or can there be that kind of division, even within the same family? That's amazing. Jesus warned them of something that the gospel would cause.
And this division, he foretold, has surely come to pass. We still see it today. We still see this division today. And I want to talk about this because it's so clear how we see this happening today.
First, he says that within the family, this division would cause conflict, even within the family. The family, we normally think of the family as being the closest kind of relationships that this earth affords us, right?
[28:23] That this life has, that in life, the closest relationships that you're going to have are with family. It's not always true. Because a lot of times families are divided up based on whether or not people have received the gospel or not.

And we see that happen. We see that happen even in between marriages, husband and wife. We see it between parents and children, brothers and sisters.
We see it in every kind of relationship, not just family, but even including the family. He talked about how this division would feature polarization.
Now, what do I mean by that? What do I mean by that? Because the division has some unique elements to it. For instance, those who are saved, those who are in Christ, and we've talked about this in the past, that those who are saved, that one of the ways the New Testament writers talk about Christians is it talks about us being in Christ.
So those who are in Christ, those who are believers, true believers, they will join together. Almost in a sense, not necessarily join forces, but they will naturally gather together.
[29:51] Like, we're doing that right now, right? Believers, we're gathered together. We come here. Some of you may be missing family members who want no part of this.

And so you understand that sense of division there. And so it's natural for believers then, for those who are in Christ, to have that in common.
And that what we have in common, we have Christ together in common, that brings us and unites us together in how we kind of live our lives and what we do.
Now, the opposite is also true. That while those who have rejected Christ also find a new basis for unity.
And that new basis for unity is found in their opposition to Christ.
[30:53] And we really saw this in the Gospels. In the Gospels, there were two main political religious groups that kind of reigned.

There were more than just these two, but the two big ones were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. One was theologically and politically conservative, how we would define it today.
Theologically, politically conservative. The Sadducees were theologically liberal and politically liberal.
The Sadducees, for instance, they didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. They thought that once you died, that was it. Even though they were religious leaders, how can you be, in my mind, how can you be a religious leader and think that there's nothing after death?
That's who they were. So they were almost more of a political group than they were a theological group, but their roots are theological. They believed some really terrible stuff theologically.
[32:15] And you could see that the Sadducees and the Pharisees, they could not go together. They would not go together. But when it came to their opposition to Christ, guess what brought them together?

They both rejected Christ. And so they came together with other groups that would have hated them as well. The Herodians. The people who supported Rome.
They all would have hated Jesus. And so even though they hated each other, because they had a common enemy, Christ, that brought them together.
Do we see anything like that happening today? We see today LGBTQ, the LGBTQ community that support promoting that kind of lifestyle in cahoots with Muslims.
Muslim groups, Muslim political groups, Muslim Islamic groups. And normally those two groups would really not get along well together, would they?
[33:33] Because the Muslim groups would look at the LGBT group and would say, we need to throw you off the roof of a tall building and kill you.

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You need to die because you're that way. But because they have a unique opposition to Christ, to Christianity, to what represents Jehovah God, even to the extension of Jews, they are kind of joined at the hip together in promoting their common agenda.
And guess who else joins in with them? To the point of like teachers unions, academia, even traditional liberals, who would reject much of the agenda around Muslim and LGBTQ and the woke agenda and all of this trans identity.
And well, now we have a common enemy in Christ and Christianity. And so what would normally keep them apart is bringing them together because of their opposition to Christ.
And it doesn't, if you're looking at it from the outside, it's, it's, I find it interesting to hear people who are not Christian try to describe what is it that these groups have in common.
[35:02] And they always miss the mark because they don't understand theologically. They don't understand spiritually what's, what's happening here. But what we understand what Jesus is talking about here, this division that comes up and the polarization around Christ.

Christ. That's what's going on. It happened back then. It's been happening for 2000 years since his resurrection. It's happening today right in front of us.
We should not be surprised when the enemies of Christ who have much against each other come together because of the common opposition that they have to Jesus Christ.
Another aspect, another feature of this division is that it also will cross lines of authority. Watch this. You have it here in this statement. I already talked about sons and fathers, mother against daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. What would normally be lines of authority, our allegiances change because of Christ.
[36:21] And so a Christian son or daughter will often have to, obligated to disobey an unchristian father or mother because our premier allegiance is to Christ.

Our allegiance to Christ takes precedence over all other authority. And that would include government authority, parental authority, any other authority.
If that authority is demanding or asking of us to do things that contradict our stance for Christ, our belief in Christ, our trust in Christ, then it becomes our duty to remain, to hold our allegiance to Christ and to reject the authority that would demand that we disobey God.
So Jesus even speaks of that here as well. The fourth statement that he makes. He rebuked them for failing to recognize what was right in front of them.
We're guilty of this too. Look what he says. He also said to the crowds, when you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once a shower is coming, right?
[37:51] We do that. Do we talk about the weather? Do we like to talk about the weather? We love to talk about the weather. We have weather apps on our phones and weather channels on our TV sets.

And we like are talking about the, we're talking about how cold it is, how hot it is, how much rain we're going to get, how much snow we're going to get, how much ice we're going to get. We just, we love to talk about the weather.
And we're knowledgeable about the weather. We're pretty good. Matter of fact, I would probably put some of you up against some of the guys on TV predicting the weather. Okay?
Because we're all, we all know what's happening with the weather. Okay? Shower's coming. And so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say there will be scorching heat.
And it happens. We're good at this. We know what's coming weather-wise. You hypocrite. Oh, no.
[38:52] Wait, wait. That's me too, though, because I like to talk about the weather too. We're all in this. Okay? You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and sky.

But why do you not know how to interpret the present time? What was the present time Jesus was referring to? The present time that he was referring to is that the Messiah, the king, their coming king, the one who would rule and reign, who would restore the throne of David, restore the glory of Israel, standing right in front of them.
They missed it. They missed it. They missed it. They missed it. Let me ask you a question.
You know how to interpret weather patterns. Do you know how to interpret the present day that you're living in? Do we know the signs of the times?
Do we know what's coming our way? We should. We should be able to understand Jesus is coming. We don't know when, right? Jesus, we talked about this last week.

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[40:16] We don't know when. It's going to come when we're surprised. But it's not about whether you know the date of his coming or the time of his coming. The question at hand is, are you ready?

Are you ready today for his coming? Because it could be today, right? We believe that, right? As the church, we're living in the church age, so we're expecting the rapture of the church when?
At any moment. It could happen in the next five minutes. It could happen in the next 50 years. It could happen in the next 500 years. We don't know. Every generation of Christian who has lived since the resurrection of Christ has been able to say, he's coming back.
He's coming back. And we believe it's going to be in our lifetime. And they were right to say that, and we are right to say that. The question then becomes, am I ready?
Are you ready? Will you be found, last week, will you be found so doing? Doing what you've been called to do when he comes back? Because he's coming at a time when you don't expect.
[41:33] Whether you're expecting him to come as a thief in the night to steal everything, because you're lost and you don't want that to happen. Or you're ready to welcome him back as a loving master.

And you can't wait for that day. And you're looking forward to it. Are you able to interpret? See, we're not talking about weather.
It's not related to the weather. It's spiritual. Have you caught that? Do you recognize that? Last one. Last one of these wild statements. And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?
The New American Standard says it this way. Why do you not, even on your own initiative, of your own will, judge what is right?
[42:38] Why can't you guys figure this out for yourselves? That's kind of what he's saying there. Why can't you figure this out?

Figure what out? Well, as you go with your accuser for the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way. Lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer puts you in prison.
Before you ever get there, meet up with your accuser, and get it settled now, today. Don't put it off. Don't wait. So in this little parable here, this little mini parable, if you will, who's the accuser?
In this context, the accuser's Jesus. And then who's the judge? Well, the judge is Jesus. He's both in this.
[43:46] Because you want to settle with Jesus before you get to the judgment. That's the whole point. Settle up.

The word settle here can also be translated as set yourself free. Be set free. To be set free.
Be set free. Settle the account. You have an account. You have an account of sin. And you cannot pay the debt.
It's way over what you could ever pay with anything that you could ever muster. You can't do it. And so the only hope that you have is before you get to the judge, he's on your way.
Seek out the accuser. And settle it. Settle it. Now, the interesting thing is he's already done that. He's already settled the debt.
[44:56] He's already paid the debt, right? You don't know that. But he's already paid the debt. And so you're just going to go to him and say, Okay, Lord, I trust you as my Lord.

And say, Okay. The debt's been settled then. You're set free. We don't even need to go to the judge. And that's true. The great white throne judgment that talks about the day of the Lord, Christians, we won't experience that.
Praise the Lord. Because if you find yourself at the great white throne judgment, where Jesus is sitting on that throne, 100% of the people who go to the great white throne judgment are lost.
It's only lost people of all ages who stand before the Lord at the great white throne judgment. You will, as a believer, you will not stand before the Lord to answer for your sin.
You won't. You won't have to do that. I know there are some Christian pastors or teachers that talk about that, but you won't. Because if you trusted Christ as your Savior, he's already answered all of your sin.
[46:03] He's already paid the debt. Now, you will stand before the Lord at what is called the judgment seat of Christ. But that's a judgment of reward.

Have you been faithful to serve him? Have your motives been pure? Have you loved him? Have you taken opportunities to witness, to share, to be generous, to all of these, to serve?

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Have you taken a chance to witness, to be rewarded when he comes into his kingdom? But as believers, we will not stand before the great white throne judgment.
Why? Because you've taken an effort to settle it before it came to that, before the day of your death. I tell you, you will never get out of this judgment until you have paid the very last penny.
That word penny would be kind of like an eighth of a cent. We just did away with our pennies, right? They're not making pennies anymore. Well, this is even tinier.
[47:15] This is like an eighth of a penny. And you won't do it. You can't. You don't have anything to pay the debt. You can't pay your own debt.

So the only hope that we have is in that Jesus Christ has paid the debt for us. So Jesus would say, I implore you.
I beg you. Settle. Settle before you ever get to the judge. Trust in the one who's already paid your debt.
Now, what's really cool is that there's already been a hint in our text of what we're talking about. Do you remember when Jesus died on the cross? At the very end, just as he was about to die, he said some words.
[48:28] John chapter 19. I want to take us there. Actually, I've got to fill in the blanks. Jesus implored them to settle their debt of sin with God through Christ so that they'd never have to stand before the judge of the universe.

And he would say the same to you and I today. If you've never trusted Christ as your Savior, what are you waiting for? Here's your invitation.
Jesus on the cross. This is how John records this, the Apostle John.
After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now, what's the word? Finished. Finished. Greek word to tell us die.
Some of you are familiar with that. That phrase said something by way of fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy about his crucifixion.
[49:34] That he was thirsty. I want to read this now to you. This is the new American standard version of this. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been.

What's the word? Accomplished. You can translate that word both ways accurately. It is finished. It is accomplished. Okay?
Means the same thing. Okay? It's finished. It is accomplished. And so a jar of sour wine stood there and they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and he held it to his mouth.
And when Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, here again, it is finished. To tell us die. He bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
Notice that his life wasn't taken from him. He gave it away. But he said these words. It is finished. Don't interpret that as I am finished.
[50:37] As in bad news. I'm done. It's over. That's not what he means by this. This is another way of saying it's accomplished.

It's paid in full. When merchants were stamping on a receipt that the payment had been made in full, this was the word that was stamped on the receipt.
To tell us die, paid in full. It's finished. It's accomplished. It's over. It's finished. You may have heard this before. Jesus gave us a hint of this in the passage that we just looked at.
Back in Luke chapter 12, verse 50. I have a baptism, a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is finished.
Accomplished. Accomplished. To tell us die. It's what he was referencing. He knew that by going to the cross, he was going to be paying the debt of our sin.
[51:47] He knew that when he died, when he shed his blood and he died on that cross, that it would be doing the job, that it would be finishing the work. It would be completed and done.

There's no more work that has to be done. No more striving. No more working. We can literally Sabbath rest in the finished work of Christ on the cross.
Someone asks you, do you obey the Sabbath? The best answer to that is, yes, I have rested from my work, and I am trusting in what Jesus finished for me on the cross.
It's done. It's done. It's accomplished. It's finished. The question for you is, have you settled that account?
Have you made peace with your accuser? Have you trusted him and his finished work on the cross?

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[52:58] When he stands in Luke chapter 12 and he's saying, look, I've got this terrible thing that I know it's coming. I can't wait to get past it.

But I know that once I do it, it will be finished. It will be accomplished. It will be done. And you and I would be forgiven, set free, brought into his family simply by putting our faith, our trust in him.
You can't earn it. You can't be good enough for it. You can't. There's nothing you can do to make yourself acceptable to God.
You are a sinner condemned by your own sins. But Jesus Christ paid your debt, and he invites you to trust him as Lord and Savior.
Have you done that? Will you today settle that account? Meet with him today simply in prayer and say, Lord, I'm trusting you today with my life.
[54:15] It's yours. I trust you with my life. There is no other plan. There is no other. There's no plan B. There's no other way. I know that.

And I'm trusting you. I know that I have sinned against a righteous and holy God. And now today I understand that you paid my debt.
And so today, Lord, I want to settle that account. I want to receive that forgiveness that you offer freely. That grace that you offer freely.
And so today I trust you with my life. Let's bow for prayer. Lord, today we love you.
We are so thankful for what you've done for us at the cross. Even here in Luke chapter 12, you're anticipating that moment when it will be accomplished.
[55:28] When it will be finished. It's all leading up to that point. It is such a pivotal moment in our history.

When you paid the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross. A death you did not deserve. Because you are perfect and you are holy.
But you took our place willingly. You died so that we could be forgiven. So that we could be set free.
And I pray, Lord, that even today, there would be people here, perhaps in this room or people watching online, who would say, yes, I want to accept this free gift of eternal life.
I want to settle that account. I want to make sure that it's paid in full on my behalf. I want to be forgiven of my sin.
I want to be brought into the family of God. I want to know that I belong to the Lord. So, Lord, I pray today for those people that they would recognize their need and that they would be willing to say these words to you right now.
[57:01] Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I have sinned against the righteous and holy God. So much so that my sin, as we've heard today, deserves God's wrath, God's fire.

And it's eternal. But, Lord, because of your great grace, Jesus went to the cross and paid my penalty for my sin.
and the work is finished. It's been accomplished. And so all I need to do now, Lord, is to say, I trust you.
I trust you with my life. It's yours. Lord, I understand that what matters is not my past that's been forgiven, but what you care about is from this day forward.
And so today, Lord, I give you my life. The rest of my earthly existence, it's yours. My eternal destination, Lord, it's yours.
[58:31] I'm trusting all of it to you. I trust you with my life. Thank you for your great grace. Thank you for bringing me into your family.

Now, Lord, we thank you for those who today have become a part of the family of God. Lord, you know. And Lord, I pray that each one would continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of the truth, that they would grow in their relationship with you, that we would all, Lord, follow after you and serve you all the days of our lives, Lord.
And we look forward to that day when we'll see you face to face. What a day that will be. Lord, and for those of us who are believers, we understand that that will be a day of great joy, of great celebration, of great victory.
And yet, Lord, there are those who are still lost, those who still haven't heard, those who refuse to respond. I pray that you would open their eyes, help them to see the truth, and come to faith in you.
Lord, again, we thank you and we love you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Well, as I look down at my notes, I recognize that there's some unfinished business there.

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[60:20] So that I don't leave you gasping at, oh, no, I have unfinished blanks. It is finished. It is accomplished, is what Jesus announced at the cross that day.

And it's so good. But it wasn't in defeat. It was in victory. And what a blessing that is for us.
Hey, guys, thank you for coming. And have a great week. We'll see you next time. God bless you.

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