

6645

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES

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Study #2

Out of His Treasure Things New and Old

Reading: Matthew 13:24-52

Good Morning My Dearly Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You all look refreshed this morning and I have been well blessed in that I have you in the first session, the other two speakers have to work a lot harder with you, especially Bro. John after lunch. Now, brethren and sisters, we are in the middle of the parables of Matthew chapter 13. The Lord Jesus Christ is in the midst of an extremely busy day in which there is much which has to be done. He is utterly exhausted at the end of this day. But the parables continue, and the men who were His followers ask the question which we saw yesterday, 'Why are you speaking to them in parables?' Yes, they didn't understand themselves but there was another aspect to it, and this was it, they expect that the kingdom that was to be established would be a worldly materialistic kingdom. Bro. John (Ullman) pointed that out yesterday. They thought it was a kingdom in which they would have the opportunity to be wealthy, to have power, to boot out the dirty Gentile Roman overlords and to once again re-establish Israeli power and independence, so that they would be a nation living by the strength of their own arm, independent of anybody else. And so when the multitudes were assembled, this is exactly what the disciples wanted. They thought that the Lord Jesus Christ intended for multitudes to follow Him, intended to take them along so that they would become His followers, together with Him, becoming the armies of Israel, to fight against the Gentiles, and re-establish Jewish power once again.

And so when Jesus starts speaking to them in parables, that the multitudes cannot understand, the disciples panic. What are you doing? We want them to join us, we want them to understand what you're saying, we want them to become disciples. Why are you teaching them like that? Think about an evening lecture, if you had a thousand people show up at your evening lecture, when the brother who has ascended the platform and began to speak at the lectern, began to speak in terms that the people could not understand at all, how would you feel? That's how they felt. What are you doing? Then he explains to them the different parables. Now there are more that follow. There are parables, for instance, that show up in the other gospels that don't show up in Matthew, but the one that we are going to look at, initially, is going to be in Mark.

But, before we do that, it is important for us to go over the last part of the interpretation of the parable of the sower. In Luke chapter 8 verse 15, the words that are used are more comprehensive than what we see in the Matthew record, because in Luke chapter 8 verse 15, when the Lord Jesus Christ is talking about the good soil, the seed that fell on good soil, this is what He says 'And that in the good ground are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience'. Bro. Colin pointed out to me yesterday something that is very important, this is in regards to that group of people that fell on the thin soil. The ones who were full of joy, he pointed out the fact that they are the only ones that the term 'they received it with joy' is applied to. So there's all kinds of joy and happiness and warm feeling inside of them, concerning the truth. They are like those people who come into the truth and are all full of vigour and enthusiasm, and in five years they've left the truth. They've gone! There isn't that depth, that depth of apprehension of what the truth really is all about. They don't take it into themselves; it rests on the surface of their lives, so it cannot sustain them when they have to endure difficulty in the truth, because of the truth.

But, look at what Luke says. He says, 'and that in good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart'. That word 'honest' means beautiful, comely, noble. Isn't that lovely! They are people with beautiful and comely and noble hearts. They may not be much to look at, they may not have much, but they are people with that kind of heart. Honest and good heart, and the word 'good' means 'worthy of admiration', admirable, why? Why is the heart of the individual who is 'good ground' worthy of admiration? Go on! 'Having heard the word' (they listened, they harkened to what was being said to them. The word of God has not been something that has been easily dispensed with for them. They've taken heed to it and harkened and they hold it fast, brethren and sisters, notice they don't hold the teachings and traditions of men, every new idea that flits by. That's not what they are holding fast too, they are holding fast to the word itself. That word 'hold fast' means to 'grab hold of something and hold it down or hold it tight', that's how they take the word. That's the effect that the truth, the Word of God, has on this good ground; they hold it fast and then they bring forth fruit. Does it happen immediately? No, they bring forth fruit with patience. Time. Developing slowly in their lives, not like the ones who were full of exuberance, who were full of that superficial joy that waned so that they fell out of the truth, they held it fast. Brethren and sisters, are we holding fast to the Word of God today? Are we reading the Word of God, do we know what we believe, do we know why we believe what we believe? Controversies come up, destroy sections of our community, put all kinds of doubt in people's minds, why is that? Why is it that we always follow after what seems to be logical at the time, when these things come up? It is because we are not holding fast to the Word itself, we're not reading it. We're listening to what bro. X or bro. Y say, and we like them because they are kind hearted people or they're eloquent people, and so what they say seems to make sense to us, so therefore it must be right. But the Word itself is something for us to hold onto, not what they say. This is where we have to find what the truth is. You notice they hold it fast; it's tightly held, nobody can pull it away from them. Nobody can take the word away from them, that kind of man or woman, they hold it fast and they bring forth their fruit with patience. So there is time that is

required but we've got to take the time and invest the time in our bibles and in the lives of our ecclesias. So, that's the group of people that have beautiful hearts. Hearts that are admirable to the Lord Jesus Christ. They may not be the most brilliant, the most eloquent, they are not all the things that the world looks at and sees as worth anything, but to God and the Son of God, that's the kind of brother or sister that has a beautiful heart. And in your simplicity if you find that your understanding of the truth is simple, if you are elderly, and you find it difficult for you in circumstances where there are all kinds of controversies that come up and bother you and wound you and hurt you deep down inside, break your heart, remember, God and the Son of God, look upon the beautiful heart, the heart that is willing to listen and hold fast to the truth. Whatever storms might be going on all around, whatever ideas, whatever issues may be in the process of being debated, whatever might be breaking the ecclesia down, HOLD FAST to what we believe as Christadelphians. But know, know, we must know what we believe, why we believe it. We've got to communicate that to our children. It's not just something that we do on a Sunday or Wednesday night, Christ wants us to have hearts that hearken and that apply, and that understand and hold fast.

And so we talk about pioneer brethren, brethren and sisters, and some of us freeze up when we hear that. We bunch up in the shoulders and our necks stiffen because we don't want to hear that kind of thing. Brethren from other countries tell us that in North America that we are worldly and loose and do not really hold the truth. We don't like to hear that, but we better listen, brethren and sisters, because there are things we don't like to hear about ourselves that are true to some degree, because we are surrounded by a society that is entirely corrupt, materialistic and focused on theecia, ease of existence, laziness. And we have been affected by it; the pioneer writings, the writings of our early brethren, are the richest writings that have ever been written, in the history of this community. They are the richest things that have ever been written outside of scripture itself. That is true; people only say that that is not true when they have not read them. So, brethren and sisters, let's hold fast to the truth; let's read the writings that we have been blest with and hold onto what we were given by generations that have gone before us, and not loose it in all of the foul corruption that comes upon our ecclesias when people want to think freely, when really what they want is the licence to teach and do what they want to do, without regard to the health of the ecclesia. Let's hold fast to what we really believe and know it and understand it, because this is what good ground is all about and these are the ones that receive eternal life in God's kingdom.

Now, brethren and sisters, the Mark record adds something right after this that we don't find in Matthew, let's look at it. Mark chapter 4, the good ground has received the Word. They've taken it into their hearts, they are holding fast to it, but there is a danger of taking that truth and hiding it. There is a danger of taking the Word that they have received and covering it over. So the Lord Jesus Christ deals with that right now, look what He says. Mark chapter 4 verse 21, 'And He said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.' He's been

telling them to listen all along and now He gives them this little description of bushels, candles, beds and He says, if you've got ears to listen, listen to this. Don't put it away from you, listen to this. What is He talking about? It seems so simple, candle. It was a little saucer filled with oil; there was a wick in it and when that wick was lit, the wick had to be tended to periodically. The oil had to be replenished in order that the lamp might stay alight. The lamp is the gospel, the light which is set in the life of a believer when suddenly the truth begins to fill him or her. The light is the light of the world; it's the gospel truth amidst all of the darkness of this world. Now, why would somebody put it under a bed? or under a bushel? what's the bushel? A bushel was a basket. It was a measure, a certain amount of grain in a container that would hold it was a bushel. So the bushel originally referred to the quantity of grain, but then it became associated with the basket. The measure. It was a standard measure. Standard measures and grain. What is talking about? BUSINESS. A bushel was something that was used in business. Farming. The selling of goods. I want a bushel of this or a bushel of that. Business, that's what the bushel is, brethren. So it is possible for a man to take the truth of the gospel and cover it over with business. Business. Now, what does the 'bed' stand for, brethren and sisters? Well, the bed was something not just what people lay on, it was a low palate; it was something that they ate on, that they rested on when they were talking to each other. So it involves LEISURE. So, brethren and sisters, it is possible for the truth to be covered over and have superimposed upon it, business, the making of money. All that is associated with bushel baskets, professions, careers and leisure. Now, what continent in the world is more afflicted with this problem than our own? Where in the world do we find people who chase the almighty dollar as it is called, more than in our continent? Where in the world is there more scope for leisure time, relaxation and personal time, than in this continent? It's right here; He's talking about us. Now, brethren, He talks about something being hid and He says, 'whatever is hid will be manifested'; it is going to be brought out openly, and what's kept secret well, that will come abroad'. Where, have we heard words like that before? Now, remember, He's talking to us about our illness, that is our tendency to take business and leisure and to make those things our life, so that the truth is something in the background. Where have we heard words like that before?

No doubt you'll remember Luke chapter 12. Luke chapter 12, and once again the Lord Jesus Christ here, is speaking to His disciples. Verse 1, 'In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say unto his disciples first of all' so that's who it applies to first, brethren and sisters, to us. He began to say unto His disciples first of all, 'Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy'. Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. The leaven is something which in small quantities is able to corrupt a large quantity of things. In the making of bread it is a good thing, but leaven can also have a corrupting influence on other things. And only a little will corrupt a great deal. 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees', so there was something that the Pharisees did or believed or taught that was like leaven, in the life of a disciple of Christ. The way of the leaven of the Pharisees which is 'hypocrisy'. That word 'hypocrisy' you will remember if you've studied 2 Timothy, is a Greek theatrical term, brethren and sisters. Hypocrisy, the Greek word 'hypokrisis' means 'from under a

mask', that's what it means and it referred to Greek theatre, where one man would play many parts. He would pick up a mask, put it to his face, and he would act out a role and then he would quickly change it for another mask and be a completely different individual. The audience never saw his true face once, in the process. Never; they only saw the masks. So there's something that the Pharisees do that's corrupting; and what they do is play acting. It's a life that's full of masks. One mask for one character and one area of life, when they were out in their business, because the Pharisees were covetous, we are told, when they were out there breaking the backs of the poor, who worked for them. They would wear what kind of mask? When they were in the streets praying and showing their purity to the world around them, and how much better they were than other people, well, that was another mask. And Christ says, Look here, my brethren, the light of a believer is not play acting. It doesn't involve masks. You ought not to be somebody in the work place and somebody else in the ecclesia, and somebody else again at home. You're a brother in all three places; you're a sister in all three places. Beware, of that play acting of the Pharisees because it's leaven in the life of a believer. It corrupts every aspect of his or her life. If you are not a fully integrated brother in all areas, then your life will corrupt away in the truth. Remember, Paul said to Timothy, 'the thing that strikes me most about you is your unfeigned faith, your unhyprocritical faith'. Same word but in the negative, because Timothy's life was a life without play acting.

Now, look what He says as He goes on further, 'There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops'. What's He talking about? If we cover over the truth with a bushel basket, it's in darkness. When we are together, here, we are in a little closet far away from the world, speaking together. It's easy for us to be brethren and sisters when we are around brethren and sisters, but when we are outside, then it's different. So, whatsoever things are spoken in secret, well, we go outside and hide them, one day when Christ returns, those very things will be shouted from the housetops. Do we think we can cover over the truth in our lives? Those very things will be the things that will be shouted from housetops. And whatever it is that we take to ourselves and we feel is worth everything - the bushel baskets and the beds, now those are things that will not continue to exist. What happens when you put a lit fire underneath a bushel basket that made of some kind of ignitable material? It catches fire! It's destroyed! What happens if you put a lamp underneath a bed that's low and made of wood and straw? It ignites, it catches fire! So whatever in our lives is connected to career, money making, investments, house, home, whatever in our lives is connected to leisure activity, sports, entertainment, television, whatever we find is not of the truth, well, all of that is going to be destroyed by the gospel truth, by the Word of God made Flesh, when He returns to the earth. The Son of God, our Judge, all of that will be destroyed. Well, this is a stern message, isn't it, brethren? It shakes us up and we don't like it, but it isn't meant to make us comfortable with ourselves, it's meant to put that conflict in the life of a believer that must always be going on. The conflict between what our flesh would have us to do and our natural, base, brutish inclinations, and on the other hand, and the Word of God which is inside of us and which wrestles against

everything which is natural to us. The mind of Christ that slowly, painfully, with patience, is developing in us. It was vital that the Lord Jesus Christ tell them those things. It was absolutely essential that they be utterly clear in their understanding of the difficulties that faced them.

Now, brethren, these things being the case, we must realize something mustn't we? The Word of God must be something that we are always in, if we are to keep ourselves spiritually alive and to keep our brethren and sisters alive. The earliest writings of our community are things that we ought to know, because if we don't know, we don't deserve the history and heritage of this community. A people that is unaware of its heritage, quickly loses it. Robert Roberts wrote 'that the truth has been a difficult thing to get at; it's an easy thing to lose'. Very easy to lose. Our generation is a generation that has come closest to losing everything that we have always believed. And what about the young people that we're raising? What will happen then, if the Lord is not here soon?

And so, He resumes the parables in Matthew chapter 13, having told them about the bushel basket, the bed and the lamp. The lamp that is to be held aloft, so that all can see what it is. And we go back to chapter 13 of Matthew beginning at verse 24, 'Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field'. Now, you might ask yourself, 'why is He talking about the kingdom of heaven as if it is something on the earth?' Isn't that something that is only going to be established when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back to the earth? Brethren and sisters, Robert Roberts' Nazareth Revisited is the finest thing that has ever been written on the life of Christ, and the little tiny sections that he has in the parables is absolutely beautiful. When you have read all the other commentaries and whatever anybody else has said in the brotherhood on the parables, go back to him. Read him first and read him last, and you'll find that he is the best. Look at what he says about the kingdom of God.

'The kingdom of God is not exclusively an affair of futurity, though it mostly belongs to the future. The foundation of it has been laid in what God has already done upon the earth. His work with Moses, by Israel, his work by Christ, have both contributed important and powerful elements, even His work in providence among the Gentile nations is doing something towards it, in the way of preparing the earth and mankind. So that, when the kingdom is finally and fully established, it will have been prepared from the foundation of the world.' So, everything God is doing right now, it's all in preparation for the kingdom. So whatever stage we're in right now, is a stage of 'preparation for the kingdom'. It's a stage of the kingdom, we're in the time period of the kingdom of man; the kingdom of flesh, but there are preparations that have been made ever since the garden of Eden, what the Lord, what Yahweh set up the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, already the kingdom of God was in preparation there. So right now, in our lives today, there are aspects of the kingdom of God that are reality for us. They should be for us. There is the reality of being with brethren and sisters who will labour with us in the kingdom. That is our hope. We are with people from the kingdom, right now. There is the Word of God which has

everything involving the kingdom in it. So there is the Word of God, FULL, of the kingdom of God, right here with us.

There are aspects of the kingdom now, and the kingdom, of course, is being prepared for you. God's arrangement of history and His arrangement of our individual lives likewise. The kingdom of God, He says, 'is like unto a man which sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn'. Robert Roberts, in his exposition of this section, shows this is a wonderful prophecy, of exactly what would happen to the people who had the privilege and the honour of seeing the Lord Jesus Christ when He was on the earth. He put His seed in good ground, so there's the focus of the sower, where He went to sow, now, He's zeroed in on the good ground. So, there's the good ground, people that have believed the truth. It's making an impact on them. They're attempting to hold fast to the Word. That's what was going on right in His day. There were those like that. Who was the enemy while men slept? in other words, when they weren't on their guard? that went and sowed tares? They were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, the scribes, the priests; these were the people who went and corrupted, or threw corrupting influences into what He had already sown.

Now, with the tare, brethren and sisters, it is a particular kind of plant that's called 'darnell'. It only grows with good grain. It only grows with things like wheat or barley. Something fascinating about darnell, it looks exactly like wheat, even a fully experienced farmer cannot tell the difference between the two when they are growing. The only time you can tell the difference is when the fruit is produced. When the grain is produced, then it is obvious that they are different. In darnell in the grain, there is a particular kind of fungus that is poisonous. It can cause vomiting, it can also kill depending on how much of it has been milled in with the wheat, when the flour is being measured. So, what these people did, was, they took His teachings and they corrupted them by sowing into the population that Christ had preached to, ideas that were corrupting in their influence.

Now, here He goes on further, 'while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder', and Bro. Roberts sees the servants of the householder as the disciples, those that were closest to the Lord Jesus Christ. They look around and they say, 'Look, there are tares in there' and they ask if the Lord will allow them to root up the tares. But they can't, because the roots of the tares are interconnected with the roots of the wheat, can if you

pull up the tares, you'll destroy the wheat also likewise. When did the separation of the two take place? Well, it says in verse 30, 'let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares' GATHER THEM FIRST, bind them in bundles and burn them. But gather the wheat into my barn'. So, there is an emphasis on the tares been dealt with first. This is prophecy brethren and sisters, the very people that rejected Jesus, that corrupted His teachings, that added their poisonous doctrines to the truth, in the minds of the population and made many fall away. Those people, well, their city was burned, was destroyed utterly. Many of them were bound and taken into captivity, many of them were burned to death, many of them starved to death. Bundles, so that was many, many people, and over a million people died in Jerusalem in A.D.70. 'But gather the wheat into my barn', and Bro. Roberts sees here, first the destruction of Jerusalem and then many, many years after in our time, the gathering together and the giving of life to those that are the redeemed when Christ returns. So, there's a wonderful prophecy in there, a devastating prophecy to the people that were assembled, if any of them understood. But, for us, brethren and sisters, there is also another exhortational aspect, isn't there?

In our community today, there are ideas that look like the truth. They're darnell. We have the truths, we are struggling to hold fast to the truth, we can make a much better effort at understanding and holding on to the truth, but there are many brilliant brethren, with wonderful minds, who have sown darnell in with the truth. They look at our doctrines and they believe that they are no longer first principles. Things that are as vital as the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and what it accomplished. What it meant? What it did for us and for Him. What God did through Him and what God will do through Him. They look at those things and they say, well, these are not first principles. This is not a first principle issue. There's a corruption that's happening within the doctrinal structure of Christadelphia, that's always been the case. There have always been those that corrupted the doctrines based on their personal interest, based on their self-will desire to independently speak and to believe whatever they wanted to, no matter what it did to the ecclesia. And these things become intertwined with our doctrines, and there are all kinds of problems that result in our ecclesias. If that is happening in your ecclesia and it is happening in North America, and your heart is wounded as a result, and you feel frightened and anxious, and the brethren seem to be unable to deal with these, to stem the tide of the tares that have been put in together with the wheat of the truth. Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ is watching all these things. God is in control of what will happen in the end. The truth will always prevail. Our task as simple brethren and sisters, is to hold fast to the Word itself, to not allow ourselves to be corrupted by the corrupters of our doctrines and to be prepared to defend them. To defend them, we've got to know them, brethren, we've got to understand why we believe what we believe. We must know our statement of faith, we must understand the principles that Bro. Roberts had in the Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias. We can't just be managers of our ecclesias, we've got to know what the truth is, so that we can enliven, think a life, the lives of our brethren and sisters, with the truth, teaching them, braking it down simply, but always giving them what the truth is. It is the only way that we can counteract the influence of powerful, brilliant brethren, whose desire it is to open up the doors and the borders of our community. It's the only way. It is on our shoulders as arranging brethren to do that.

Are we doing the work that needs to be done? Are we doing the study that is required of us? Or are bushels and beds what we are focusing our minds on?

Another parable put He forth unto them saying, verse 32, 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof'. Now, the mustard seed is not the smallest of all seeds, and when it's grown, it's not the biggest of all trees, but it is the smallest of all cultivated seeds, the seeds that they cultivated at that time, and it did grow to be the greatest of all cultivated plants. Notice, cultivated! Someone's looking after it, it's not like that which grows wild; it's cultivated. The mustard seed, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed'. What does that mean? Something small and tiny; well, the gospel message was originally entrenched in promises. It was given to an old man, an old man who look as if he was at the end of everything in his life, who couldn't really from the world's point of view, produce anything. He might have been considered by the world around him as an insane old man. Ur of the Chaldees, he leaves all that behind and he grows old wandering, in a place where he doesn't even know where he can lay his head. But, there are promises to come and from that old man, old, weak and frail in the eyes of this world, was produced the Jewish people and through them, the Redeemer, and through Him all that would be redeemed. And through Him after the end of the period of the kingdom, all that will be redeemed, all that will fully manifest God, through Him, little things now, but to the world around us, the truth is such a little thing. What God offers is a little thing, and everything that they have and do and want and live, is everything. And yet, that little truth, that little gospel, the good news of the kingdom, what God is going to do, will fill the whole earth and replace everything that they do in their life today. The little stone that was cut out without hands destroyed that huge image. Crushed it up and filled the earth and became a mountain! In your little life we all feel deep down inside a yearning for the increase of faith, of the gospel in our lives, of what is most important to God in our individual lives. We all feel that need, that's why were here. You don't go to bible school unless you have a need to have what is inside of you filled and strengthened. We all have that little vacuum inside, we want it filled up more and more. We want the Word of God; we have to fill ourselves through the Word of God. Bro. Colin pointed out, if you took away the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ, all that was left was what? THE WORD OF GOD. And that's what we are struggling to do, and when we look at how little our faith is, how little our apprehension our understanding our comprehension of God's ways and what God is going to do, how little, how little Christ's character is in us. Let's not be cast down, let's remember that through the Word of God, the Spirit Word, it is possible for us, by reading it and meditating on it, and acting upon it, and living it out, more and more to grow, so that the little mustard faith, mustard seed that you might have now, will grow to be something huge and mighty. A wonderful little parable, brethren and sisters. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth, from a political, governmental, world news point of view, it will be a little thing, and yet from that little return, when He steals into the earth like a thief, the redeemed come with Him as armies, and He fights against the Gogian forces. He fights against all of those who are fighting against His people and then those that come up against Him and then the

horribly unholy alliance that will come. And when all of these forces are destroyed the iniquity of the nations are brought under His power, then that which was a little thing, will be everything, and then, then, we who felt ourselves to be nothing, then we shall be rulers, kings and priests with Him. A wonderful thing to look forward to! What we are looking forward to is what we ought to be preparing for in our lives today, brethren and sisters.

Well, then, 'what is grown the greatest amongst herbs becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof', and that doubtless will remind you of Daniel 4 and the image of Babylon, like a tree, with all of the birds and beasts nesting in and around under it. So there, brethren and sisters, that was the sad caricature, that was man's version; this is God's version, God's kingdom which is cultivated, like the mustard seed was cultivated. It's not wild, doesn't grow by fleshly, human instincts, it's something that grows up, cultivated by God, and will fill the earth and then there will be shelter for the nations under it. Then there will be shelter for those who are poor and starving, who've been abused. Who throughout the earth have been taken advantage of by those who have wielded, selfish, greedy, corrupt authority over them. That kingdom will replace that sad caricature of man's kingdom.

And so He continues brethren, and He says, 'the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened'. Well, is leaven a bad thing? Not in this instance, though it's used that way in other places, because it is unlikely that a woman would poison her family, by making bread. So she's making something that's good. 'The kingdom of heaven', that little thing that's inserted into the flour that leavens the whole lump. Now three measures, three measures, brethren and sisters, we're going to end our class now, but tomorrow morning we'll pick this up again. Please think about what the three measures are all about. There are three places in scripture where this measurement is used, and there are some wonderful ties between all three of these areas.

The message, above everything else that we must end on, brethren and sisters, is, that the kingdom of God is not something that we specifically sit and wait for. The Word of God is not something that we specifically sit down and listen to. We actively seek out and search out what God is and what He requires of us? Who He is? What He is doing? We actively search out what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, who He is? what He shall be? and what He did in His life and in His death? And will actively take home the responsibility of coming to an understanding of what we believe and why? Go back to what we learned when we were baptised and learn more, and deepen the understanding, so that those rich, beautiful principles that are our doctrines, begin to become things that are alive, living inside of us. We've got to take the Word and make it our life, not part of our life, so that we live out the Word in our lives, so that we fill ourselves up with it, so that we can hold fast to the truth. So that we can keep our ecclesias alive through controversy, so that we can have the hope of life in God's kingdom, which we will not have if we don't make an effort.