



The Parable - Wheat and Weeds

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Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 14/2/21

Intro: Each time I move my Dad gives me plants to grow. He loves his vegies and herbs. I am always enthusiastic but before the harvest, the weeds have won. He hasn't given up trying.

But...I tell my Dad that **my garden is you.**

Today in Matthew's Gospel we will read a parable of the weeds. This parable is only found in Matthew, not the other gospels. It is one of two parables that is given a name by the disciples as we read in verse 36 when they say:

"Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

It is one of the few parables given a thorough explanation by Jesus. This parable is the first of a series of six parables specifically referring to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Leading up to this parable the pharisees have confronted Jesus, as we can read in chapter 12. The pharisees hold tight to legalism. They were critical of the disciples gathering food on the Sabbath. The disciples are confused. If Jesus is King, why can't the world see it?

This parable is a response to the underlying questions the disciples have about what is going on. Just like in the parable of the Sower, the problem is not with the seed, the message of the gospel, the problem isn't with the one who sows, the problem is in the human heart. In this parable Jesus is redefining who are the people of God and he is reorienting their hope.

1. The Field

Be discerning... not naïve!

Read chapter 13 verses 24-28:

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied.

Explanation: The good seed, the wheat, has been sown by the servants...but there is sabotage. In the dark of night an enemy comes and sows weeds amongst the wheat of the land-owners crop. The word used for weed is that used for a noxious plant, similar to wheat but actually has a grain that is poisonous. To harvest the wheat with the weed would make the whole crop worthless. It is also thought the head of the weed looked similar to wheat and could not be properly distinguished until harvest time. For this reason, the landowner called the servants to wait so that the wheat could be distinguished clearly from the weed. (V 28)
The wheat and the weeds co-exist as they grow.

There is a Battle going on!

The disciples are puzzled by the story so they ask him what it means.

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."³⁷ He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of

the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil.

While we face opposition in the world, we must remember it is not the people we oppose but the evil one – the one who sowed the weeds into the field.

Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6:12:

¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Our battle isn't with our culture or our non-Christian friends, it is with the one who stands behind them. The saboteur - Satan. This knowledge should help us love our enemies much better, not that they don't act unkindly but that they don't act alone. There is another power at work in the world. Notice how the power works, sowing weeds among wheat, poisoning what is good. Satan is always the destroyer, taking what is good. His only plan is to oppose God. Satan offers nothing constructive, no compelling vision for humanity. Satan cannot create. All he can do is corrupt.

2. The Harvest

God's responsibility – God's Kingdom and God's Judgment

Vv 28b-30 *"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'²⁹ "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"*

Jesus refers to the world as his kingdom. It's his kingdom, not ours. We are not in control. This life we live has only one of two endings. All of our choices lead us to Christ or not.

And v40 is a very clear statement of the options:

⁴⁰ "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the

kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Jesus is saying to the disciples to expect opposition while you prepare for redemption. The disciples could not understand how evil could still exist if the Kingdom of Heaven was here. They believed the Messiah was to establish his rule and reign in righteousness. But Jesus is saying to expect opposition as you prepare for His righteous redemption. *We live in the Now but also the Not Yet!*

This parable makes it clear that Christians and non-Christians co-exist, they live together like wheat and the weeds. Outwardly, they may look very similar in the present.

We have an example here in Australia. *Lantana* might look like a strikingly attractive plant and in some respects the foliage and flowers are quite beautiful. The species is native to Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. But it is now known as a weed of national significance and is regarded as one of Australia's worst weeds. It's invasive, it has potential to spread and it is impacting on the economy and the environment.

Lantana was first recorded in Australia in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens in 1841, and a few years later it had spread to gardens up the east coast of the country. By the 1860s it was reported as a weed in both Sydney and in Brisbane. Even in a Botanic garden, the good seed and the weed coexist.

As we coexist, we need to stay engaged. We cannot retreat from the world. We must follow Jesus' example. Remember he mixed with the poor and the outcast. He became friends with Gentiles. He came as a servant before he became conqueror. *It is tempting to try to remove the weeds, but the story is clear – not possible...and not our job!*

Our Responsibility - Wait for the harvest - Make growing choices

Does this describe you or our church (the people of God)? We can't close the door to weeds or put a safe fence around our lives. This is what the Pharisees seek to do. We are called to serve, as Jesus modelled, and to be good seed in the garden of life. It is not our job to judge or marginalise the weeds. It is our job to live with Christ-like love.

Romans 12: ⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Verse 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

Jesus could not be more clear that one day he will come and he will judge all people. Jesus referring to himself as the Son of Man is referenced from Daniel 7:¹³

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,^[a] coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Jesus is leaving no doubt. He will return and judge the Earth.

Verse 42 says:

They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You can't run from God but, throughout the Gospels, Jesus is saying you can embrace him. You can trust Christ because his patience in these last days, as the wheat and the weeds grow together, is for deliverance. This is a parable of hope. The King of Glory, this Son of Man, is also the suffering servant, who has love for the world and shows us mercy. God's provision in Christ is far better than we could have imagined. There on the Cross, Jesus didn't just make a way...he bore our punishment for us. He suffered in our place, willingly taking the judgement we deserve so that we might claim the righteousness he deserves.

Jesus took the judgement we deserve so that we might claim the righteousness he deserves.

Jesus is a compassionate Saviour. He first comes as Saviour. Embrace him. Accept his forgiveness.

3. How do we grow to maturity?

The Word of God James 1:20 "...humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you." The Word of God is not only the means God uses to save your soul from the penalty of sin, it is also the means God uses to save your soul from the power of sin in this life. You must do more than hear the Word. You must humbly receive the Word and let it go deep down in your soul. You must meditate on the Word of God then let it work its way out in obedience and blessing.

The Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:22 ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ ~~24~~ ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Jesus' followers will be known by their fruitful love. We cannot bear fruit on our own. We must rely on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to convict us and change us to be more like Jesus.

We must pray against the toxic and poisonous weeds that can grow amongst us.

The Community of Faith

As we become more Christ-like people can spot the difference and be drawn to Jesus.

Hebrew 10:23-25, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Verse 43 concludes the story with this:

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

This is our hope. This shining is the brilliant radiance of God himself.

Continued over...

Let us shine as God's people in this world, living now in our present reality with the clear hope of future glory. May our words and our deeds open the way so that ...

... whoever has ears, let them hear.



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