

Parable of the Wheat and Tares

Matthew Chapter 13: 24-30; 34-43

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: ²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. ²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

Jesus continues to preach and teach through parables. These are natural events or examples that help us to understand Kingdom and spiritual principles. Let's analyze the story in the natural.

Good seed is planted in a field. The expectation is that the good seed will produce a good crop.

While the workers were sleeping, the enemy comes and plants other seeds in along with the wheat. The enemy didn't stick around. This must have happened at night when it was harder to see the enemy coming and when he knew folks might typically be sleeping. Therefore, this seems like a calculated plan, premeditated crime, and not a mere accident or coincidence. Notice the enemy leaves the scene of the crime (Sandra).

It must have taken some time before they realized what had happened because they didn't figure it out until the crops started to come up. So, when the good crop and what was expected to come up appeared, they discover the undesirable consequences start to appear as well.

Some quick research I found about wheat and tares:

- Tare – defined. An injurious weed resembling wheat when young.
- Tares look very similar to wheat in the early stages of growth. It may be hard to see the difference at first.
- Wheat is a bigger and stronger plant. Tares are smaller, weaker and the seed is black.
- Some tare or rye grass is used as grazing hay for livestock.
- Wheat of course can be eaten and used as grain and serves as ingredients in much of what we eat; tare seeds are poisonous and can make you sick.

²⁷ 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? ²⁸ He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 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, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

The servants can see that something is amiss. They don't know the answers to why this has occurred, so they go to the Man who planted the good seed and ask him two questions.

- Didn't you plant good seed?
- If you planted good seed, where did all these tares come from?

So, let's take the story and do some application from here based upon what we have read so far and what we learned from the parable earlier in this same chapter.

The servants are expecting something good to come from the seed that was planted. Expectations are probably high. **Something now has happened that is not according to plan.** The **tares were not expected and certainly not desired.** It is not according to plan.

If I **place myself in this story**, when Christ has planted good seed in my heart, my expectation is that things are about to be great in my life soon. When I wake up and see the unexpected, the undesirable, and a problem in my field....I might have a tendency to question the seed. Was it really, good seed because I believed it was and didn't expect this weed problem? But I like **what the servants did, they didn't make assumptions and didn't bug out....they didn't know the answer, so they ask the Man they serve for the answer.**

- How come this happened? Where did this problem come from....how did this and why did this happen to me? I didn't ask for this trouble. **See 1 Peter Chapter 4; James 1:2-3.**
- **Application, seek God for the answers to your questions.** He is still the answer for the world today.

Notice the response from the Man.

- He knows the answers and he doesn't have any problems sharing the answers or responding to the questions and concerns of his servants.
 - **Application:** If you don't know the answer to the situation, have you asked the Man?
- An enemy is responsible for this problem. **He clarifies and corrects their assumption. There is nothing wrong with the seed He planted.** The seed was good. **The enemy is responsible for the trouble they are facing.**
 - **Application:** **There is nothing wrong with the Word of God**, the trouble you may be dealing with is not the word but the opposition from the enemy.
 - **The enemy doesn't want you to experience and enjoy good fruit.** Don't blame God or the seed, it is more than likely the other guy....when you are planted in good ground and the seed is good.
 - **Why is the enemy a hater?** Because he hates God and what He loves, and he doesn't want us to enjoy the peace of God.

- The servants – they seem ready and willing to immediately go out and start pulling up tares. But they don't assume, they do something we all should do, they ask if what they are ready to do, is something that the Man wants them to do.
 - Application: before you run out there to do Kingdom work, it might be a good idea to check with the Man first to see if that is what he wants you to do.
 - There is a problem, and the servants are ready to deal with the problem based upon their understanding.....but they ask the Man first before they just jump out there.
- Notice the wisdom from the Man. Nope, don't do what you want to do, it might do more damage than good.
 - While you are pulling up the tares, there might be some wheat that gets caught in the process and the good fruit won't be able to continue to grow to maturity.
 - Your efforts now, might damage something we want to keep.
 - Let both the tares and the wheat grow up together; but know there is an expiration date on the tares, and we will set all this straight during harvest time.

My experience with pulling weeds is that you must get the root and it is easier when the weeds are small. However, I must be careful because when pulling them up by hand their roots become connected with the roots from my good grass. It is real easy to pull up some of my good grass while pulling up weeds. It seems in this story, they didn't recognize the tare until the roots were established and intertwined with the good wheat. Pulling them up would have been hard and time consuming (pulling up weeds ain't fun) and would have damaged some of the good wheat.

Look at the mercy of God....He would rather let the tares grow up with the wheat than to suffer losing any of His good fruit.

Key Observation: I just saw this. What the enemy did to mess up the plan will not work.

Notice that the original plan of planting good seed, growing a good crop and producing a good harvest and bringing that harvest into his barns is still in effect. The plans of the enemy did not stop the original plans the Man had; those plans are still in effect.

Application: His plan is still in effect (Jeremiah 29:11). No matter what the enemy throws our way, if we remain planted in good ground, God's plan for us is still in effect. I can't get distracted by all the things happening around me....I have to know as his servant that His plan is still in effect in my life regardless of the trouble I may see. There is an expiration date for tares. The weapon used by the enemy cannot win when we are planted with good seed in His field.

The servants are going to save themselves some time and trouble dealing with a problem now, that God says He will deal with later.

³⁴ All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: ³⁵ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I

will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. ³⁶ Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

Interesting. Jesus is careful to only speak and teach during this time in parables in large part because his role is to fulfill prophecy. This should be encouraging to us today. Jesus is concerned in getting the word out so that people can get an understanding which is key to being planted in good ground. However, it **should also be encouraging that Jesus is dedicated to fulfilling prophecy.** Jesus who has been given all power, is dedicated to fulfilling prophecy. So his power is working for our good to bring us into the future God has prophesied pertaining to us.

Love the disciples who are eager to gain an understanding. **If you don't understand then ask.**

³⁷ He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

³⁸ The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; ³⁹ The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

Jesus doesn't have a problem answering their questions. He didn't break it down to them at this time until they asked. When they asked, he gave them the answers.

Application: If you don't understand and just don't get it, just ask. Be sure you ask the right person who is connected to Jesus who knows the truth. You can also just ask Jesus who gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us to the truth. Please don't lean on your own understanding, conspiracy theories, or assumptions.

The parable explanation – the natural revealing the spiritual.

- **Jesus is the Man**, the one who plants good seed in the world.
- **Field = the world as it is now.**
- In the world now, there are Kingdom Kids who represent the good seed and there are the kids from the enemy (the devil) who are wicked.
- Harvest represents the judgement to come and the angels reap the harvest and separate the good seed from the tares.

The analysis:

- There are good Christians planted in good ground and Christ is in them
- Since tares start out looking similar to wheat, there are folks who may call themselves Christians and may look like Christians and hang out where other Christians hang out; but they are from the devil (influenced or used by the devil) rather than being true followers of and from Jesus
- These false believers are purposely deceived and used by the devil....they may or may not be aware they are weeds.

- Your yard looks good after a cut, but after a little while, you will begin to see the difference. **Time eventually will show who is the real deal.**
- Tares are smaller and weaker than wheat, so I would expect spiritually true Saints to be stronger in their Spiritual growth.
- Now in the story, the Man says if you remove the tares, some good seed (Christians) will get uprooted as well. I could see that happening as we get connected and perhaps join in their activities or agree with their points of view, logic, etc.

⁴⁰ As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Judgement awaits the tares or those who are not planted by Christ and being used by the devil to do his work and hinder the Spiritual growth of true Christians.

⁴¹ The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ⁴² And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus explains to his disciples that there will be a harvest time where the **separation between the Saints and the "aint's" will occur.** The tares or false believers will be facing a horrible fate and/or come to the realization that they were wrong. But as God originally intended, the good seed will produce and receive a reward. **There is a reward for living righteous.**

I read an account of this story on **Christianity.com** – We will always have people who infiltrate our ranks, the Ananiases and Sapphiras and the Judas Iscariots (I started to wonder is this one of the reasons Jesus allowed him to be a disciple?) – the satanic plants that undermine the Word of God. But it is **not our job to weed those people out.** We don't see a person's heart. **Our concern should not be who the hypocrites are, but whether we are hypocrites ourselves. Our job is to take care of ourselves, to take heed and make sure that we are true believers.**

David Guzik – This parable powerfully teaches that **it is God's job to divide in judgment.**

Magistrates and churches may remove the openly wicked from their society; the outwardly good who are inwardly worthless they must leave; for the judging of hearts is beyond their sphere (Spurgeon).

Application – our job is to receive and properly apply the word of God (parable of Sower and the seed), and not pass judgement on weeding out false believers. God will deal with them. **We should be careful not to take on the job that God has designed for His angels to perform.** How can I be sure I'm not a false believer in danger of judgment....**stay planted in the good ground and you cannot fail.** I hope we all hear this word.

References: Rev 14:15, Rev 20:12-15, Gal 6:7-8, Matthew 7:17-23, Matthew 25:31-41

Other class observations:

- There is a delay in judgment until the harvest

- During this delay, some might (tares) be converted; God is not slack in His promises but is long suffering, not willing that any should perish.
 - Matthew Henry – tares contained under the means of grace may become good corn
- Commentary – when God steps up His work, Satan also steps up

Key Questions

What does a tare look like today?

How can we know the truth when there are so many different opinions and doctrines in the world and even in the church? Are the things we see and the teachings we hear good seed or tares....and how can we know the truth and respond correctly?

Who are the tares that the devil plants today?

Review the verses in Romans Chapters 1-2. It outlines the obvious tares we see in the world and even in the church today.

Romans 1:17-32

¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

²⁴ Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

²⁵ Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

²⁶ For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

²⁷ And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

³¹ Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

“Will you kindly notice, that, according to my text, *knowledge is of no use if it does not lead to holy practice?* ‘They knew God.’ It was no good to them to know God, for ‘they glorified him not as God.’ So my theological friend over there, who knows so much that he can split hairs over doctrines, it does not matter what you think, or what you know, unless it leads you to glorify God, and to be thankful.”
(Spurgeon)

Guzik -- Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie: In every rebellion and disobedience against God we exchange **the truth of God for the lie** of our own choosing, and set the **creature** before the **Creator**.

- Paul uses the definite article – it is not *a lie*, but **the lie**. **The lie** is essentially idolatry – which puts us in the place of God. It is the lie *you will be like God* ([Genesis 3:5](#)).

See also Romans 2

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

² But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

Guzik -- Notice that the moralist is not condemned for judging others but for being guilty of the same things that he judges others for. This is something the moral man would object to (“I’m not like them at all!”), but Paul will demonstrate this is true.

- Wuest, quoting Denney on for you who judge practice the same things: “Not, you do the identical actions, but your conduct is the same, i.e., you sin against light. **The sin of the Jews was the same, but their sins were not.**”

This is huge, if we are sinning in principle, we can't judge others who are committing what we may consider greater sins than our own.

Let's look at some passages from John and especially Matthew Chapter 23 to identify other types of tares that may not be so easily recognized. We must be careful to not act or become like these tares.

John 4:20-26 – the woman at the well was **seeking the truth about worship**

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

²¹ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers** shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

²⁴ God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must worship him in spirit and in truth.**

²⁵ The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

²⁶ Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

John 8:31-33

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye **continue in my word**, then are ye my disciples indeed; ³² And **ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

³³ They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

John 8:44-49

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he **speaketh of his own**: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

⁴⁵ And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. ⁴⁶ Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? ⁴⁷ **He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.**

⁴⁸ Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

⁴⁹ Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but **I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.** ⁵⁰ And **I seek not mine own glory:** there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Matthew Henry:

He did not *court* men's respect, but was indifferent to it, and in reference to this he saith, "*There is one that seeketh*, that will secure and advance, my interest in the esteem and affections of the people, while I am in no care about it." Note, God will seek *their* honour that do not seek *their own*; for before honour is humility.

"*There is one that judgeth*, that will vindicate my honour, and severely reckon with those that trample upon it." If we undertake to judge for ourselves, whatever damage we sustain, our recompence is in our own hands; but if we be, as we ought to be, humble appellants and patient expectants, we shall find, to our comfort, *there is one that judgeth*.

Hypocrisy is the practice of engaging in the same behavior or activity for which one criticizes another or the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform. In moral psychology, it is the failure to follow one's own expressed moral rules and principles.

Greek: a dissembler, pretender (stage actor). Definitions of dissembler -- a person who professes beliefs and opinions that he or she does not hold in order to conceal his or her real feelings or motives.

Matthew 23:15, 23, 24-33

¹⁵ **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye **make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.**

²³ **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and **have omitted the weightier matters** of the law, **judgment, mercy, and faith:** these ought ye to have done, and **not to leave the other undone.**

²⁵ **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye make **clean the outside of the cup** and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. ²⁶ Thou **blind** Pharisee, **cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.**

²⁷ **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed **appear beautiful outward,** but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

²⁸ Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

²⁹ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, ³⁰ And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

³¹ Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. ³² Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. ³³ Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Now that we've seen and hopefully have a better idea of what tares may look like today, we need to understand the truth. We must be able to discern what is tare doctrine and what is truth. Today there is much confusion and arguments over beliefs in this area. Is our faith based on truth or the latest trends of the day? Are some of these trends the truth and are some of our traditions contrary to the will of God? Let's look at some scriptures from John to help determine how we can know the truth.

John 14:15-17

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 15:26

²⁶ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:13-15

¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

John 18:37-38

³⁷ Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that **I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.**

³⁸ Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life:** no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The takeaway – let’s watch ourselves to ensure we don’t become hypocrites or tares in the His field. We live for Him and obey His commandments. and leave the judgment of others to God and the angels.

We can know the truth of the matter by following the first four critical steps in the seven-step process (Feasts). Following these steps will help us to operate in Spirit and in Truth as we navigate through this world and interact with others in making disciples and converting wheat into tares through love and truth.