

Sermon – Stay in Your Lane, by Faith...Parable of the Wheat and Tares

Matthew Chapter 13: 24-30; 34-43

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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 has been teaching through parables. These are natural events or examples that help us to understand Kingdom and spiritual principles. Understanding the parable is the key. Let's analyze the story in the natural. Here are the key points.

- A man plants good seed in his field. The expectation is the good seed will produce a good crop.
- While the workers were sleeping, his enemy comes and plants tares in along with the wheat.
- His enemy didn't stick around; leaves the scene of the crime.
- This must have happened at night when it was harder to see the enemy coming and when he knew folks might typically be sleeping.
- Some time passed before they realized what had happened.
- When the good crop and what was expected to come up appeared, they discover the undesirable consequences start to appear as well.
- They expected the wheat; they didn't expect the tares.

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. Hard to see the difference at first.
- Wheat is a bigger and stronger plant. Tares are smaller, weaker.
- Wheat of course can be eaten and used as grain; tare seeds are poisonous and 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.

The servants are expecting something good to come from the seed that was planted. Expectations are 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. But 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 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 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.
- He clarifies and corrects their assumption. There is nothing wrong with the seed. 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.
 - 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 want 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.
- 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 uprooted in the process.
 - 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 Observations:

- Nothing wrong with the seed, it is the enemy's fault.
- Ask the Man if you have questions.
- Don't assume, ask before you go out there to deal with the problem.
 - The servants are going to save themselves some time and trouble dealing with a problem now, that God says He will deal with later.
 - It might save you time and trouble.
 - Might keep you from damaging valuable stuff.
- The original plan and expectations are not void as a result of the enemy's actions.
 - What the enemy was trying to do, doesn't stop the plan of the Man....which is to have a good harvest.

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. 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.

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 of the devil rather than being true followers of Jesus
- Time eventually will show who is the real deal. The saints from the ain'ts.
- Tares are smaller and weaker than wheat, so I would expect spiritually true Saints to be stronger in their Spiritual growth than false believers.
- 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. 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.

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.

Jesus explains there will be a harvest time. 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.**

My sudden realization – I have not always stayed in my lane. – I have been found on occasion pulling up weeds. As a servant of God I have pulled some tares up in my day. Why?

- I don't like the way they make my surroundings look
- I assumed God wanted me to deal with them like that (you gotta go, gotta go)
- Lack of faith that God was going to deal with it and/or that the tares would take over
- Because I never really understood this parable until now....I didn't know any better and never really asked God

If it is not our job to remove tares, but the angel's job....then what are we as His servants supposed to do?

Love others, even the tares. Why? They might be converted. My dad hung around church for years and wasn't until in his 70's did he really become a true believer and be converted. Stay in your lane or you may do damage to a good seed believer who might be uprooted by your weed pulling actions.

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 if this lesson is 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.

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 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.**

Other observations:

- There is a delay in judgment until the harvest
- During this delay, some tares might 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

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?

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.

Do freak out....stay in the servant lane; God is still on the throne. My faith based on truth or the latest trends of the day.

So while we wait, we should love others, as Christ loved us; convert tares where possible; make sure we don't become converted and corrupted from our connection with tares; and lovingly warn others of the judgment to come. The harvest is coming.