



Sermon – The Church Won't Stay Like This for Long....Parable of the Wheat and Tares

Matthew Chapter 13: 24-30; 34-43

Preached 1/21/24; Cloverdale Baptist Church

Another parable he put 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.

Looking at the parables in Matthew Chapter 13, most of them are about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like today. Jesus has been teaching through parables. These are natural events or examples that help us to understand the Kingdom and spiritual principles. Understanding the parable is the key to understanding the Kingdom and how it operates and what it looks like and what it will look like. The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven (verse 11) are available through the understanding of these parables.

In Luke 17:20-21 we see that Jesus is not talking about a physical Kingdom just yet. It starts out as a spiritual Kingdom on the inside where God through a process begins to have greater rule and dominion in the life of a believer. The outward change will be manifested soon enough. People make up the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰ Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

Since people or believers are also church members and church attenders, the church is also a significant part of the Kingdom. If Ephesians 5:25 states Christ died for the church, so it must be a significant part of the Kingdom.

Let's analyze the story in the natural since Christ says you can compare the Kingdom of Heaven right now to this story. 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. The serpent didn't stick around in the garden either.
- 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 show up as well.
- They expected the wheat; they didn't expect the tares.

Some quick research I found about wheat and tares:

- 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.

So, what does this have to do with the church and with us? Jesus said the Kingdom is like this right now. If the church is part of the Kingdom, then there are tares in the church.

The good seed must be the Word of God in an earlier parable of the sower and the seed. It is the good news. In the natural, the man probably didn't plant all this seed by himself. It is his seed, but he has workers to help spread the seed for him.

The workers get the seed from the man, they in-turn plant the seed for the man. I don't know about you but I receive the word of God and I plant the seed for Him. In other words, I work for the Man.

The man is planting good seed so he is expecting a good crop. We as the workers and servants of God should be expecting good things coming out of the preaching and teaching of the word of God. We may not be able to see it right away, but something good and desirable should be fully expected to come out of the spreading of the good seed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Cloverdale, we may not see it yet, but I'm expecting something good to come up out of the seed planted here. Check the grounds, check the parking lot, something good is planted here.

While good stuff and good plants are seen growing up and starting to produce fruit, then a mystery appears....these tares or weeds show up. We find out that an enemy or hater of the man has shown up secretly and planted these weeds in with the wheat or the good stuff.

- The enemy doesn't try to pull up or destroy the good seed, instead he attacks it secretly.
- It takes a while, that is part of the process, before they realize that the tares have been planted. It takes a little while for the weeds to be revealed as weeds.
- The weeds have been there for a while, the workers just didn't know it.

Today, in the church, weeds are still showing up. Things are happening in the church that is a surprise to those who are truly working for the man. They look good on the outside for a while, but eventually they reveal themselves as weeds. And just like a tare, these weeds work against the good seed or the wheat and just like a tare, if you eat it or take it in, it will make you sick.

Well, if this really is an example of the church, what should we as the workers of God be doing? Let's see what they do in the parable.

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?

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. Note, it is not according to their plan.

- The Kingdom doesn't operate based upon our plans, but upon the plan of God who is King in the Kingdom. Christ is the King who executes the 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.

- They question the seed. Is the seed good or not? The seed is not doing what it was designed to do so it seems. Is there something wrong with the seed....your seed?
- If the seed is good seed, how come this happened? Where did this problem come from....how did this and why did this happen. See James 1:2-3.

Notice the response from the Man.

- He knows the answers and he doesn't have any problems sharing the answers with 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.

- Satan works against the plan of God. But God has a plan for the enemy. That is part of the process.
- The servants – they seem ready and willing to immediately go out and start pulling up tares. But they do something we all should do, they ask the Man how they should handle this.
 - 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.

It would seem logical to me to just go get rid of these tares right now. However, logical is not always spiritual.

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.
- 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.
 - 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.

The Kingdom involves process. There is a process and a defined set of steps or principles that outlines how the Kingdom works. If you don't understand the process, you might miss the Kingdom.

What does all this have to do with the church?

- If the church is part of the Kingdom, and it is, and Jesus says the Kingdom looks like this story, then you have tares in the church today.
- We should not be surprised when we see things in the church pop up that we think shouldn't be there. It is part of the process of the Kingdom.
- It is not our job as His workers today, to weed out the tares and pluck them out. Our job is to continue to ensure we are planting good seed in the field.
 - Notice in Verse 30, the man doesn't say to his workers that they would do the separation, he says he will assign another group, the reapers to handle that task.
- How do we do that and what does it mean?
 - Spread the truth of the Gospel to others.
- It is part of the Kingdom process that the wheat will grow together in the same field. Likewise, the church will have diversity in its congregations.
 - There have been and will be believers and unbelievers mixed in and growing together.
 - There have been and will be spirituality and carnality mixed in and growing together.
- We should not let what we see in the church, which should alarm us, cause us to not do the church work we are assigned to do...spread the word of truth to others.
- The church is not designed nor is it God's plan that the church will stay like this. There is a separation and a judgement coming.

If there are tares in the field, how did they get there?

- The enemy using deceptive practices caused them to appear. Bad seeds.

If there are tares in the church, how did they get there?

- Just like the man alone didn't plant all of the good seed, he had workers; the enemy has worker too.
- The enemy brings the tares into the church but he doesn't work alone. People bring tares into our congregations working for the other guy.

Are there any tares in us? The Kingdom doesn't just consist of the church, we are the church, so this whole Kingdom process not only applies to the church, but it also applies to us as individuals.

- The good seed of the word of God is planted in my heart.
- I can expect the enemy to swing by and try and hinder my growth and development, or my harvest and my future by sowing bad seed in my mind. Deception is his primary method for planting bad seed.



As a church here at Cloverdale, it is time for a revival to go out and spread the seed of hope in Jesus to the world. To spread the truth in our own fields so through the power of the Kingdom, the enemy is defeated and perhaps we transform tares into wheat, while we await the coming of the King of Kings.

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Matthew Chapter 13: 24-30; 34-43

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.

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

¹¹ He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled,

The parables are designed to help reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom. But everyone will not get it. It is not that Jesus is trying to hide it from them, most people will not have the desire to understand the word to this level of understanding. So the word and the Kingdom still today is a mystery to most Christians but to those who have a hunger, deeper understanding of the mysteries are revealed by design. It is part of the process. You can hear the word and not understand the word of God or how it works.

The disciples heard the parable with the rest of the congregation, but they didn't really understand what it meant. The parables help reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom.



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 or YouTube channels alone for the truth.

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 – what does this have to do with the mysteries of the Kingdom and the Church?

The Church looks like this now.

- There are good Christians planted in good ground in the world and in church. They are children of the Kingdom. They are connected to Christ and belong to Him; God is their Father.
- There are others in the world and in the church that look similar to the children of the Kingdom, but they don't truly belong to Christ, they belong to the devil. But they can be found in church as well.
- 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
 - Even demons know who Jesus is, but they are not trusting in Jesus or His word.
 - You can know Him and yet not be a true believer.
- Time eventually will show who is the real deal.
- Now in the story, the Man says if you remove the tares, some good seed (Christians) will get uprooted as well.
- One of the mysteries of the Kingdom and the church is that it looks like this. But why not deal with the tares now?
 - Perhaps the Father in His wisdom and in His great mercy allows the two to grow together to provide time for the tares to repent and be led by the Spirit of God rather than the enemy.

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 righteously.

What do tares look like today?

- Jesus explained things that offend and those that do iniquity which translates to unrighteousness, perversion, violating the law, guilt, etc.
- There are those in the church who shine by being in right standing with God.
- There are those that live in darkness still who are not in right standing with God. They are in the world too, they are in the church too.

The plan and process is clear, there will be a change to the Kingdom....it is on the way and in the works. Likewise, there will be a change in the church. The Church may look like this today, but it won't stay like this forever, a change is going to come.

What are we to do while we wait in the gap? The gap between right now and the coming of the King with His angels.

- Follow the process and be in right standing with God. Be led by the Spirit and not the flesh.
- Spread the truth of the good seed to others.
- Watch out for false doctrine and the deception of the enemy.
- Don't embrace or practice sin and don't take on the role of the angels. Their time is coming.

Don't be surprised by what is happening and what you see in the world and even in our churches. Stay the course of righteousness in love. Spread the good seed.

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

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.



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.

Process brings peace. God will deal with our unexpected and undesirable problem. The problem has an expiration date and you are not designed to stay like this.