

The Wheat and the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

In none of Jesus' parables do we find a clearer picture of the true purpose and tactics of the devil than in this parable of the Wheat and the Weeds. Here we plainly see that the devil is committed to the destruction of anyone and everything that has the stamp of God's goodness on it.

Therefore, in this solemn and almost frightening parable, Jesus was trying to impress **three** things on his followers. **First**, he underscored the validity of **the owner** of the field in which the seed was sown; **second**, he introduced **the invader**, who planned and calculated to undermine the work of the owner; and **finally**, undoubtedly with sadness, he described **the pretenders**, the offspring of the invader's work.

The field in this parable belonged to the owner. It had its boundaries; it was identifiable. This man, the owner took great pride in his field. He had cultivated it and prepared it for sowing. He was a conscientious,

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purposeful farmer. He intended to raise wheat, and he marshaled all his agricultural skills to do the very best he could.

Before I go on with today's reading, let me share a funny story I once read. A man had transformed an overgrown plot of ground into a beautiful garden and was showing a friend what he had accomplished. Pointing to a bed of flowers, he said, "Look at what I did here." His companion corrected him, "You mean, 'Look at what God and I did here'." The gardener replied, ""I guess you're right. But you should have seen the shape this plot was in when He was taking care of it by himself." We chuckle at the man's reply, but let's get back to our reading in Matthew.

We must always remember that this is still God's property on which we live! Sometimes we forget that fact because of the blatant evil around us. At no time has God relinquished his proprietorship. The devil has been described as "a squatter" in this world. A

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squatter is one who settles on land he has no right to and works it for his own advantage. This is what lies behind Christ's speaking of the sower sowing the seed in his field. The world, ultimately, is not the property of the one who is forever sowing evil seen in it.

No part of this world has the Lord forfeited to the devil. This is why Jesus commissioned his followers to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." In Paul's epistle to the Romans, he wrote, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." When Adam and Eve sinned, this world was cursed; since that day it has borne the stigma of that divine displeasure. Still the world writhes and heaves in spiritual agony.

The owner represents the Lord Jesus, fulfilling his mission. While he was on earth, he did the sowing personally. Then, before he was crucified and ascended to the Father in heaven, he commissioned

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his followers to carry on His work of sowing. And what is the “seed” he is sowing? It represents the sons and daughters of the kingdom of God.

How can we summarize what Jesus tells us about the owner of the field? He is the Son of God. He is the one who “sows the seed” from which grow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. He sows in all the field. The whole world is his, and he longs to save those in every corner of His world.

We are not to misunderstand the phrase “while everyone was sleeping” to suggest carelessness or irresponsibility. Rather, it means that the farmer and his hands had done all they could. They had prepared the field and had carefully sown the seed. There was nothing more they could do at that point. This is an accurate picture of the sensitive work of the Holy Spirit in convicting the sinners of their sins and planting in their heart the gospel seed.

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Jesus was specific about the enemy; he was the avowed, particular enemy of the sower. He said, “His enemy came.” That which the devil hates about Christians is **Christ in them**. Thus, when Christ is truly being honored in our lives, we are more than ever the targets of the devil’s attacks.

What of the fruit of this seed sown secretly in the nighttime? The servants wanted desperately to fan out through that field and pull up every tiny blade of the weed, which had begun to grow. But they received this astonishing advice from the owner of the field: “Let both grow together until the harvest.” In other words, there was no way they could get every single blade of the choking weed that had begun to spring up. Furthermore, in their indignant zeal, the servants would have pulled up many blades of the wheat.

In these words, Christ counseled his disciples to have patience in the fact of all the havoc that evil

seems to be creating in the midst of God's working.
It is a great

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temptation to wade into a situation in our indignation and straighten out the problem once and for all!

So, Jesus' solution was to "let both grow together until the harvest." Sometimes in our zeal to have a "holy church," we only make it easier for self-righteousness to flourish in the midst of the holiness. It is often the case that when we root up all the "sins" in the church, we do little more than leave room for the subtle and even more destructive "sins of the spirit"—the holier-than-thou attitude, the spiritual snobbery, the "super-saints", the "super-critics" who, armed with their Bibles, have the last word on what is wrong with everyone who doesn't agree with their interpretation of Christianity.

This does not mean that we are not to battle against evil when we see it clearly. Jesus said that persons who are unrepentant of their blatant and open sin

are to be excluded from the fellowship of the church.
In

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spite of these rare and exceptional cases, Jesus is saying in this parable, that, for the most part, it is hard to wait, lest in our haste we bruise the tender wheat, the young, sensitive, impressionable Christians who inevitably get hurt in such situations.

The final judgment is going to be full of surprises. When the time comes for the separation of the goats from the sheep, the wheat from the weeds, we most likely will see how distorted our best judgment was in many situations. But in that day, Jesus, our Lord and King, will come with his sickle and reap His wheat. Then all of our sickles of judgment will fall to the ground, along with all of the illegitimate “crowns of righteousness” we have put on our heads! We must never forget that God can find, bring home, and set at his table even the worst who have

repented of their sins and called him their Savior and Lord.

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So, what are the **lessons** we can learn from the Scripture reading from Matthew?

The parable of the wheat and the weed illustrates that good and evil can exist together in the world until the final judgment. It teaches the importance of patience, as the harvest (judgment) will come in due time. Believers are encouraged to discern between good and evil without rushing to judgment. This parable emphasizes that there will be consequences for those who choose to live unrighteously. It offers hope that ultimately, justice will prevail and the righteous will be rewarded. And finally, the sower (Jesus) is depicted as one who spreads good,

highlighting the importance of spreading positive influences in the world.

Please bow your heads as I pray.

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Heavenly Father,

Thank you that Christ died on the cross to pay the price for my sin. Thank you that he rose again to break the power of sin in my life and to give me new life in Christ. Thank you that I have been born from above and am Your child. Help me to listen to Your voice and to be obedient to Your Word. May I look to Jesus, moment by moment, and give me wisdom to discern who and what is not from you, so that I may avoid the evil and cling to the good. We ask this in the name of Your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**