

“Separating the Tares”

Matthew 13v24-43

Scripture Ref: 1 Cor 5:6-7; Ps 78:2; Matt 25:31-43; Luke 6:37; John 13:35

- 1. Throughout chapters 12 & 13, our King Jesus has been teaching His followers about the Kingdom of heaven, using parables and word pictures to help them get a better understanding of His kingdom.**
 - a. See the Kingdom of God is unlike any Kingdom that has ever existed on this earth.**
 - b. Remember last week we played a little word game with the word “Easter”, and I asked you what was the first thing that popped into your mind (one person wrote me that “bunny” was the first thing that popped into their head!)**
 - c. Well the same thing might be true of the word “Kingdom” – when a person in first Century Judea heard the word kingdom, there were many things that they might associate with it.**
 - i. They may think of King David, or Solomon**
 - ii. They may think of a Roman King, such as Herod**
 - d. So Jesus took the time to help them get a better understanding of the Kingdom of God – the Kingdom that HE represented. It’s been a progressive work...**
- 2. Back in chapter 4 Jesus began teaching “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand”**
 - a. In chapter 5 Jesus outlined the principles of the Kingdom, telling people that the “poor in spirit”, those “persecuted for righteousness sake”, those who teach others about God, - these are the people that will inhabit the Kingdom**
 - b. Chapter 6 He assured us that if we “Seek first the kingdom of heaven”, God would take care of our material needs.**
 - c. In chapter 7 He told us that those who “do the will of the Heavenly father” would enter into the Kingdom**
 - d. And in chapters 12 & 13 Jesus begins to describe the Kingdom in ways that show contrast – contrast involving the people that one would find in the Kingdom.**
- 3. It’s as if we are looking at a diamond – holding it under a magnifying glass, turning it in every direction to be able to see every facet.**

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who 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 grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field?

How then does it have tares?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

4. **Jesus is painting a picture of a man that sows a field of wheat, and everything is set, the seeds are planted in the ground.**
 - a. **But there someone in the town that is his enemy – someone that hates him.**
 - b. **That person sneaks into the farmer’s field at night, and plants something called “tares” in with the wheat.**
5. **What is a tare? A plant known as darnel or cockle, and it grows plentifully in Syria and Israel. The plant stem can grow up to 1 meter tall, and it looks a lot like wheat.**
 - a. **The similarity between these two plants is so extensive that in some regions cockle is referred to as *"false wheat."***
 - b. **It usually grows in the same areas as wheat and is considered a weed. It parasites wheat fields**
 - c. **It bears a close resemblance to wheat *until the ear appears*. The ears on the real wheat are so heavy that it makes the entire plant droop downward, but the "false wheat", whose ears are light, stands up straight.**
 - d. **The seed is not edible – eating the grain can make you feel poisoned with drunkenness, and can cause death.**
 - e. **In other words – it is a counterfeit – its bogus wheat.**
6. **Now think about the “enemy” that planted the tares in the farmer’s field.**
 - a. **This ‘enemy’ is a pretty evil person – because that farmer would not only be inconvenienced by the tares, but he would lose income from the field.**
 - b. **His family might eat from the grain, getting sick and possible dying.**
 - c. **A ruined crop might ruin a farmer, and put his family into jeopardy.**
7. **... now hold that thought...**

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

8. Some interpret this parable as meaning the “kingdom growing mysteriously very big, and sheltering people.” There are two problems with this...
 - a. #1 – There has never in history been a mustard plant that grows into a tree. That would be abnormal, a monstrosity.
 - b. #2 – Whenever birds are noted, they speak of evil.
9. A better interpretation, and one that fits better with the context of Jesus topic would this:
 - a. Jesus is warning about the Kingdom – I.E. the church, becoming big – organized – and becoming a monstrosity. (*why do I think this? Read on...*)

The Parable of the Leaven

33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

10. Another example where your bible commentary might say that this is a picture of the kingdom of God spreading all through the world... the only problem is that in the bible leaven is *always associated with sin*.
 - a. And check it out - three measures is the exact amount of meal customarily used in a grain offering to God, *and leaven has absolutely no place in a grain offering.*
11. This looks to me like a picture of a warning that sin cannot be hidden in the kingdom – because like leaven it will spread and corrupt the entire lump.

1 Cor 5:6-7

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened.

Prophecy and the Parables

34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to 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 kept secret from the foundation of the world.*" (**Ps 78:2**)

12. After the people were sent away, His disciples wanted to understand more clearly...

The Parable of the Tares Explained

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but

the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

13. Now a common theme begins to be revealed – Jesus is talking about people.

- a. He is talking about people that seem to be in the Kingdom, but are not true.
- b. He is talking about the danger of institutionalizing His Church
- c. He is talking about the danger of having hidden sin – agendas, personal gain, corruption in His Church
- d. He is telling us that there is an adversary that comes against the Kingdom of God – that adversary is Satan.

14. Now there is no risk that God will lose and Satan win – there is no contest – like when the US Army and Marines moved in to Baghdad, the Iraqi army melted away.

- a. But they didn't go away – they hid and began an insurgency.
- b. Their tactics were murderous – they blew up innocent people, women, children, themselves.
- c. It was a culture of death – they didn't care who died, they knew they were beaten but they wanted to take as many with them as they could.

15. Satan is in the same predicament. Jesus Christ defeated Him completely at the cross – game over!

- a. But Satan still wants to take as many as he can to hell with him.
- b. After the resurrection of Christ, Satan tried to exterminate the church through persecution, and used the Roman Empire to achieve his goal.
- c. But it didn't work – the church grew and flourished under the persecution. So Satan decided to implement a new strategy – *he joined the church.*
- d. In AD 313, by edict of Constantine, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, and you know what? The church has suffered ever since.
- e. The leaven was placed into the loaf – and it has spread throughout the church.

16. In many ways the institutionalized church has become like the monstrous mustard plant, and the evil birds have roosted in its branches.
- a. There are so many aberrations in the church, some people hesitate to admit that they belong to a church.
 - b. It has gotten to the point where when someone says “I am a Christian”, that statement in and of itself doesn’t hold a firm meaning, because there are so many “brands” of Christianity.
 - c. You have to dig deeper, identify a creed: “exactly what do you believe?”
 - d. That’s why many churches have a “Statement of Faith”, so that people can know what they believe...
 - e. Things like: We believe Jesus IS the Son of God, and the He rose on the third day, that the bible IS the inerrant word of God, etc, etc.
 - f. When you think about it, it is ludicrous that we would even have to have such a document. It shows just how apostate the church has become.
17. I believe parable of the tares tells us that the church will have people in it that look just like real Christians, but they are not. It tells us that they were “planted” into the church by our enemy.
- a. It tells us that these imposters are dangerous, that they will not produce good fruit, they can choke out the true purpose of the church.
18. But it also tells us this: We don’t have to worry or get upset about it. We don’t have to try and “root them out”.
- a. See the parable explains that trying to root out the tares before the harvest will damage the wheat – that going on witch-hunts and trying to identify the ‘posers’ will only hurt the church.
 - b. No – the separation of the wheat and the tares – the true church from the imposters – will be done by the angels at the end of this age.

Matt 25:31-43

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

(aside: I recently responded to an accusation about “all of the terrible things done based on the bible and “fundamental Christianity”. I say BOGUS – if people really lived like Christ, the world would be a much better place.)

19. no you see, the bible tells me to “not judge”

Luke 6:37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

a. The bible tells me that we are to love one another

John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

b. In other words – it means that I am to love God, fulfill my personal purpose, and not worry too much about the tares – God will sort them out!

20. It also tells me that there will come a time where God will separate the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats.

a. What will be the determining factor? How many good deeds? How many sins? How many times you went to church, or prayed, or gave money?

b. No – NONE of those things – it is not a ‘weighing of good or bad’, but a *separation of those who are God’s from those who are not.* The determining factor will be “are you a wheat, or a tare?”

c. In other words – what is your identity? In other words, have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ, accepted Him as the Messiah, made Him YOUR King?

d. If you have, then Jesus sacrifice at the cross has become your sacrifice – His death has become your death – and you have been

declared righteous by God. Your name is written in the Book of Life.

Rom 3:10

"There is none righteous, no, not one;

Rom 3:23

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Rom 10:8-13

8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

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