

“The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, Part 2” Matt 13:24-30, 36-43, Sermon Notes
Pastor Marc Wragg
Saving Grace Bible Church
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Morning Worship Service

Text:

“He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.²⁵ “But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away.²⁶ “But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.²⁷ “And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’²⁸ “And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’²⁹ “But he said, ‘No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them.³⁰ ‘Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”” (Matthew 13:24-30 NAS)

“Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”³⁷ And He answered and said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,³⁸ and the field is the world; and *as for* the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one*;³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.⁴⁰ “Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.⁴¹ “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:36-43 NAS)

Text Main Idea:

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares teaches us of the present conflict between believers and unbelievers and the ultimate judgment to come

Sermon Main Idea:

The Kingdom of heaven is opposed and we are in a cosmic battle between true and false and one day Christ will come and gather His people together and will judge the false

Introduction:

“He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.²⁵ “But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away.²⁶ “But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.²⁷ “And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’²⁸ “And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’²⁹ “But he said, ‘No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them.³⁰ ‘Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the

reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matthew 13:24-30 NAS)

There is one ultimate purpose that this parable teaches us and it is this, when the Kingdom comes believers and unbelievers will be separated and unbelievers will be judged while believers will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven

Evil is so common today, it is impossible for us to consider what life would look like without evil

- We certainly desire a utopian life where everything is perfect and there are no dangers in the world but obtaining it is impossible this side of glory
- The Church is surrounded by unbelievers
- We are the light in the midst of darkness

The early puritans settling in America thought that they would make America a "City Set on A Hill" and thought that through America God would bring in the Kingdom as people returned back to God

- This idea caused our early forefathers to expand the land
- Early Christians in America tried to rid evil from our country
- It drove prohibition from 1920-1933 where it was illegal to produce alcohol in America

The great Post Millennial idea was that we were going to setup the Kingdom, we were going to prepare the people to turn to God, we were going to rid the world of sin and then the Son of God would return and take control of His Kingdom

- Millennium refers to the 1000 year reign of Christ
- Post Millennialism theology believes that Christ comes and sets up His kingdom after the 1000 years of peace. Or to be more specific that the Kingdom rules figuratively and spiritually for 1000 years and then comes and sets up His eternal kingdom
- Post Millennial theology drove the Church and early Americans to try to remove sin from this world to make the world a better place so that Christ would return
- The optimism of the 19th century was popped by world war I and II
- Until that time there was a belief that the gospel was going to reign strong and bring in an extended period of righteousness which will culminate in Christ's return
- Theologians like William Shedd, Warfield, and Hodge taught this view

Sadly this theology failed. I say sadly because I am all for Christ returning as soon as He wants to return

But now suppose that you are a Jew

- The Audience Christ is addressing
- You have been waiting for the fulfillment of God's Promises to David

"When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ "And your house and

your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:12-16 NAS)

- Suppose that you have grown up hearing the stories about how God delivered the Jews from the hands of the Pharaoh and gave them the promised land after having removed their enemies
- Imagine having lived the rebellions of the Northern and Southern tribes with their subsequent captivities and then the restoration of the southern tribe
- Imagine living your entire life expecting your enemies to be destroyed, your kingdom to return to worldwide prominence, and for peace and prosperity to be restored

The coming of the Messiah for the Jews was the hope that Israel was anticipating

- The Jews expected Jesus to come and setup His Kingdom
- "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2 NAS)
- From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17 NAS)
- "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matthew 10:7 NAS)

The early message to the Jews was that God's Kingdom was at hand

- The Jews Expected God to fulfill His Word literally
- God said it and He was going to do it

What Israel did not know is that His Kingdom was contingent on their reception of Him

- If they obey they would be blessed
- If they disobey they will be cursed
- Here they have rejected their Messiah

BUT, as Matthew has been recording for us the people rejected their king

- He is demonic ch 12
- He does miracles by the power of the Devil ch 12
- He violates the Sabbath ch 12
- He breaks the law of God

The begging question is this, has evil won? Has God's plan been thwarted?

- Is God not able to remove the evil in this world?
- Has God been over powered?
- Can God untangle the mess?

Imagine waiting your whole life, with generations before you also waiting, and now the messiah is here only to say the Kingdom is coming later, how would you respond?

- In this parable Jesus responds by addressing evil and how God is going to deal with it when His Kingdom comes

So if there is evil in this world and if there is an enemy who actively opposes it, then should we conclude that God cannot stop it or that God is unsure about what to do next?

- Absolutely not
- We need to be convinced that God does His work in this world and while unbelievers coexist among believers this in no way hinders God's plan
- The great hope of this passage is that God will deal with the evil one
- Not only the evil one but in particular the unbelievers who are surrounding the believers
- This passage teaches us that there is a coming judgment for those who do not believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ

Now let us turn to our parable this AM and see what Jesus has to teach us as He interprets this parable for us

"Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." ³⁷ And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, ³⁸ and the field is the world; and *as for* the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one*; ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 13:36-43 NAS)

The Faithful Worker Vs 24 and vs 37

- This is the Son of Man. This is the work of Jesus
- Jesus explains His activity of calling and bring people to salvation
- It is clear this is the case from this parable. The Sower is Jesus, the Son of Man and the seed He sows are the Sons of the Kingdom vs 38. He spreads believers out into the World
- The faithful worker, the Lord Jesus Christ builds His Church. He adds to His Kingdom. Each believer is a son of the Kingdom and as such a seed sown by the faithful worker, the Lord Jesus Christ

Where does this work take place?

- The field is the World vs 38
- This is not the Church
- We want to make this parable about unbelievers in the Church but this is not the case
- The church is not in view here
- So this is wherever unbelievers exist. They could slip into the Church but the Church is not in view in this parable

This parable is about believers and unbelievers who exist in this World

The Evil Worker VS 25 vs 39

- Is Satan, the devil
- He is the diabolical one
- The one who sows tares among the wheat

The evil one can sow tares in many ways

- He is the one who tempted Eve who then gave of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil to Adam to eat and subsequently cast the entire human race into sin
- He is the one who sends evil workers into the Church to mislead and distort the truth
- He is the one who controls this world and seeks to oppose the work of God
- He is the prince of the power of the Air who works treachery

The evidence of this treachery is seen in verses 26-27

The Evidence of Treachery vs 26-27

²⁶ "But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. ²⁷ "And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?"

- In time it would be obvious that there are weeds among the wheat
 - This is what it's like among believers and unbelievers
 - Initially they could look the same. Initially have the same responses to God's message
 - May even be desiring the same things and yet have two different eternal destinies
- Eventually as the plants matured it would become clear these plants are not the same

This then begs the question: Who is at fault?

Who caused this problem?

How did weeds get into the field?

The first and obvious question, is this the land owners fault?

- "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field?"
- Did the land owner act carelessly?
- Was he a foolish man who was not careful?
- Did he do something wrong?
- Do his servants need to clean up his mess?

They would quite honestly question the integrity of the land owner

This is how we respond when we see evil in this world. This is the natural response we have when we see unbelievers prospering and we are suffering

- God how can you allow this?
- How can you allow us to be deceived by false professors of faith? How can these false teachers exist? How can we have evil so entangled with the righteous?

Is there something wrong with the land owner? Is there something wrong with Christ?

- No nothing is outside of God's work

This is the key you need to get as we leave this text, NOTHING is outside of God's plan

- The existence of evil does not thwart God's work
- The problem of evil is not too complex for God
- The tares while entangled with the wheat are not going to destroy the work of Christ
- The existence of unbelievers does not stop God from accomplishing His work
- God knows who belongs to Him and so do His angels

The Dialogue vs 28

The Land Owners Dialogue:

²⁸"And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!'

What is clear, this land owner is opposed

The servants Dialogue:

"And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'"

The Rejected Plan vs 29

"But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them.

What does this mean? What does Christ mean that He does not want the wheat to be harmed?

- Does it mean that the wheat would be killed? That the sons of the Kingdom would lose their salvation?

No, it means they will not be as fruitful

- The wheat will be damaged or harmed in some way
 - Maybe they will not be allowed to produce a mature crop
 - Maybe they would not bear their seed
 - How they will be harmed is unimportant, because Christ does not explain what the exact harm is
 - But that they will be harmed is critical

What would this damage look like in real life?

- There are plenty of unbelievers who enrich our lives and would make life more difficult if they were removed
 - Not all of our public servants are believers
 - Not all Doctors, policemen, firefighters, politicians, business owners
 - Without which we would be harmed by their absence.

Look it is clear that not everyone in the government is a believer, right? Yet Romans 13:1-7 reminds us that we are to honor the government

- The government is here for our good and protection
- To have unbelievers removed could hurt our security

But this can also be true in the Church

- Unbelievers can come into the Church
- We may not be able to see them, we do not recognize they are different but the Lord of the Harvest does
- His harvesters know the difference between the wheat and the tares
- We will only know them when it comes time for them to bear fruit and they will not

I have known people who have come into the Church for many years, supported the ministry, served and then departed

- The Lord of the Church removed them

In one case I was in a ministry where the associate Pastor and his family were living a duplicitous life

- The man was trained from the same schools I went to
- He was externally a righteous man but eventually Christ revealed the man's true condition
- For years the man was involved in the ministry and at the proper time he was removed for the protection and purity of the Church

I have heard of ministries that have people who control the direction of the Church because they have the financial means but they are cantankerous and possibly not saved. Yet they are in the Church and supporting the Church which is ministering to others

- At the proper time Christ will do His work of removal

The key here is that there will be a final judgment which will separate the wheat from the tares and this is the whole key to the Parable

- The Parable is teaching us this, God will judge and separate the wheat from the tares

The Solution vs 30

³⁰ "Allow both to grow until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.""

So what does it all mean?

- Looks at Christ's continued explanation starting in verse 39

³⁹ "and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 13:36-43 NAS)

The ministers to help Jesus in that final day are the angels

- There will be a particular role angels will play in that final Judgment
- Here these angels will be sent to go forth and gather out from the Kingdom all stumbling blocks

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds." (Matthew 16:27 NAS)

- The angels will have a role in bringing in Christ's Kingdom

Now who are the stumbling blocks?

- The text answers "those who commit lawlessness."
- The lawless tares
- The unbelieving tares
- The unfruitful tares
- These are the ones who are not allowed in the Kingdom

Now one more note, Those who hold to an Amillennial Theology come to this passage and say, "Look these lawless tares, these unbelievers are removed from His kingdom or "out of His kingdom" and thus for them to be taken out of the kingdom they must be in the Kingdom now

- They then conclude that for these tares to be in the kingdom the Kingdom of Heaven must be here now, not in a literal sense but a figurative sense
- They would conclude that we are now in the millennial Kingdom and when Christ returns physically the tares will be removed and we will go into eternal life

But there is no reason to demand this

- A literal reading of this text does not demand this at all
- All it demands is that when the harvest comes the tares are removed

Notice what the text tells us about this time of Judgment

- "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age."
- First, He is making it clear that He is referring to eschatological judgment "The end of the age."
- This could be the end of the millennium as the Amillennialist would conclude OR as a pre-millennialist would conclude this would be the end of the age of the Church
- The events are the events which occur at the time of the arrival of the Millennial Kingdom

So what Jesus is describing here then is the initial act of the King in His newly established Kingdom

- This is in line with Matt 25:31-46

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³² "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are 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 *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;³⁶ 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 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?'³⁹ 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'⁴⁰ "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least of *them*, you did it to Me.'⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;⁴² for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;⁴³ I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'⁴⁴ "Then they themselves also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'⁴⁵ "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'⁴⁶ "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46 NAS)

As pointed out by Alfred Plummer and Michael Vlach "the Son of man brings the Kingdom with Him, and at that consummation 'the sons of the evil one' may be said for the moment to be in the kingdom; But they are immediately expelled, as having no right to be in it." Pg 329 He Will Reign Forever

- You see that because the tares are in the Kingdom we do not need to assume they were dwelling in the Kingdom for a lengthy period of time
- They are in the Kingdom simply because the Kingdom quickly came upon them and then they are removed
- BUT they will be removed as this parable describes and as Matt 25:31-46 describes

Finally a day of hope for prosperity

⁴³ "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

We should not be looking for ultimate prosperity this side of eternity

- Sure God will allow us to receive certain blessings and comforts in this life as He sees fit
- But there will come a day when each and every child of God will have full prosperity
 - Security from enemies
 - Lavish riches
 - Perfect righteousness
 - Deep fellowship

God will care for His people and will judge the wicked

- No matter what happens here and now God will separate His people from the unbelievers and will bless His people
- Eternal life will more than compensate for any suffering we have faced here on earth

Conclusion

The lessons of this parable are

1. There are people who believe in Jesus who are known as the Sons of the Kingdom
2. There is a period of time when the sons of the Kingdom exist alongside of the sons of the evil one
3. Eventually Christ will come and have the two separated and the tares will be removed from the presence of the righteous and judged

The days of God's judgment are coming when the wicked and righteous will be separated

Bible Study Questions

1. What is Pre-Millennialism, Post-Millennialism, and Amillennialism?
2. How does Satan work in hardening unbelievers?
3. What should our attitude be towards unbelievers?
4. What should we fix our hope upon?

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