

The Parable of the Tares Outline

Matthew 13:24-43

I. The context.

- A. Jesus had finished explaining the parable of the soils to the twelve disciples.
 - 1. A question likely was in their minds *“What happened to the three bad soils?”*
 - a. Jesus answers this question (and more) in the Parable of the Tares.

II. The Kingdom of God (of Heaven).

- A. The disciples anticipate the fulfillment of the eternal Kingdom of God with the advent of the Messiah per the prophets of the Old Testament.
 - 1. Isaiah 2:1-4
 - 2. Ezekiel 20: 33-38
- B. What was unknown to the Disciples was the “mystery”—the” Kingdom of Grace”
The disciples were anticipating the eternal “Kingdom of Glory”.
- C. Jesus before His ascension tells the disciples to not focus on the Kingdom but rather *“Be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth.”* Acts 1:6-8

III. The story

- A. A farmer goes into HIS field and plants “GOOD” seed.
- B. At night, an enemy sows tares among the wheat.
 - 1. Tares = Zizanium = Darnel = Zanah = Bastard Wheat.
- C. The workers offer to pull out the tares, the owner says no, we will wait till harvest.
- D. At harvest, the tare will be gathered and bundled then burned. The wheat will be harvested.

IV. What it means – the explanation.

- A. The farmer is the “Son of Man” or Jesus Himself.

1. The title for humanity, humility and for the Messiah (Daniel 7:13).
 2. The field is the “world” (not the church! Though the church is in the field).
 3. The “good seed” are the sons of the kingdom = all believers in Christ.
 4. The tares are the sons of the evil one = the evil one is the devil.
- B. God put us in the world (He scattered the seed) and wants us in the world... Why?
1. To mature us and make us into the sons of God He wants us to be.
 2. So that we will influence the world for the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- C. We are not the judges of the world.
1. *Do you want us to gather up the tares and burn them?* – “No! you can’t tell the wheat from the darnel!
 2. The reapers are the angels—Jesus will return with judgement and His angels will “gather up the tares and harvest the wheat”
- V. *“What will happen to the three ‘bad’ soils?”*
- A. (13:40-42) Eternal judgement and punishment.

Revelation 19:11-16, “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. **The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”**

The Parable of the Tares Pastoral Notes

Matthew 13:24-43

If you have your Bibles please turn with me to the first book of the New Testament... Matthew 13... this morning we will be looking at verses 24 to 43 skipping over a few in the middle.

The apostles had just received an explanation by Jesus of what is most likely Jesus's first of 40 plus parables... speaking in parables was a shift in Jesus's ministry tactics... Jesus had been teaching and healing early in His ministry around the Sea of Galilee... Because of His increasing popularity with the masses... and the subjects of His teaching... and His apparent disregard for the Pharisaical laws... Tensions were rising between Jesus and the Pharisees... the Jewish legalist of the day.

Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath... not breaking any of God's laws but breaking the additional Pharisaical law of not doing *anything* on the Sabbath... Jesus casted out a demon in a man creating an even bigger stir in the Pharisees who now were threatened by Him...

Jesus could sense the tension rising and decided it was too dangerous to continue teaching and healing the way He had been doing... so He began to speak in parables... and only "~~those who had ears~~"... would be able to understand the meaning of these simple stories.

Basically... only people who were truly interested in what Jesus had to say... only those who were open to His teaching and were seeking Him would have their ears opened by God to the truth.

The apostles... who had been following Jesus just heard the parable of the soils... a farmer goes out with his bag of seed and begins to sow the seeds in his field... Jesus explains that the seed lands on four different types of soil...

Three of the soils were not capable of producing any plant life... too shallow... too rocky... too many weeds... too much sun... even if a plant began to grow... the soil would not be sufficient to provide life... only the good soil... soil that the farmer had cultivated... prepared... produced good crops....

That's the story everyone heard... but a few wanted more... they wanted an explanation of what Jesus was getting at... To these who had ears to hear... the 12 apostles and a few others... Jesus explained that the seed was God's Word... and the four soils were four conditions of the heart...

Three of the soils were representative of hearts not open to the Word of God... only the good soil... a heart receptive to the Word of God... would be able to flourish in God's truth.... [I just cut out 50 minutes of that sermon]....

The apostles understood what Jesus was getting at... but I'm sure it left them with some questions.... A very big question... it should leave us with a big question... and that question is... *what happens to the three soils?*... what happens to those hearts who are represented by the soils that do not accept the seed...the Word of God?

Jesus anticipated that question... so he tells everyone another story.... We don't know how long after the first parable Jesus tells this next one... I don't think much time had passed... In front of the large crowd.... Jesus begins”

Read verse 24

Another farmer... more seed... but this is a different story with a different meaning... this story continues the topic of the Kingdom of heaven.... Matthew 13 is comprised of seven of Jesus's parables.... All of them reveal something about the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven, the same thing..... in fact... these are called “The Kingdom Parables”.

Jesus knows His disciples have an incomplete understanding about the Kingdom of God... they've been eagerly awaiting the promised kingdom the Messiah would usher in... if you remember the first day of Jesus's ministry...

The gospel of Mark tells us... after Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist... and after Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness for forty days... Jesus launches His earthly ministry... Mark 1:14 ... **Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God and saying , “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel.**

Throughout the Old Testament... the prophets had been prophesying about the coming, future Kingdom of God... The apostles... being good Jews knew what the prophets had said and they've been waiting for this coming Messiah... Because according to the prophets... when the Messiah shows up... so does the kingdom!... just a couple of these...

Isaiah chapter 2

Now it will come about that

In the last days

The mountain of the house of the Lord Referring to Mount Zion... the location of the temple in Jerusalem

Will be established as the chief of the mountains,

And will be raised above the hills;

**And all the nations will stream to it.
3 And many peoples will come and say,
“Come, let’s go up to the mountain of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
So that He may teach us about His ways,
And that we may walk in His paths.”...**

**4 And He will judge between the nations,
And will mediate for many peoples;
And they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning knives.
Nation will not lift up a sword against nation,
And never again will they learn war.**

When the Messiah shows up... and He establishes His kingdom... a kingdom of eternal peace... all the bad guys will be destroyed... Rome would be dethroned... holiness will fill the earth... only the righteous would exist in this kingdom... evil would be eliminated.

Ezekiel 20

33 “As I live,” declares the Lord God, “with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I assuredly shall be king over you....this is not a peaceful moment.. this is judgement from God over all evil... 34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; this is a cleansing...the cleansing of all evil... this is judgement.

38 and I will purge from you the rebels and those who revolt against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they reside, but they will not enter the land of Israel. So you will know that I am the Lord.

This returning Messiah is a warrior!... The apostles look around at the world and its all messed up... the government is messed up...and the coming election doesn't look promising... the culture is falling apart through the Roman influences... injustice all around... oppression.... “*we need this Messiah!*”

Good Jewish boys... the apostles understood that in a big picture... all of creation since creation has been God's kingdom... God created everything... He sustains life... He is sovereign over all creation... so in that sense... God's kingdom began at creation.... *The universal kingdom of God.*

But the disciples were waiting for God's perfect earthly kingdom that was promised and foretold by the prophets.... It would begin upon the arrival of the Messiah.... And the Messiah would

bring it to fruition...and God's perfect holy kingdom would arrive... all evil gone... and it would go on eternally.

The apostles are nearly obsessed with this new kingdom... you remember they argued over who would be the greatest in the kingdom?... who would sit on the right of the Messiah?... So Jesus... through His kingdom parables teach the apostles some amazing truth regarding His Kingdom.

And even though they have ears that hear... they don't truly get it... and they won't completely get it until after Jesus dies on the cross.... Is resurrected.... And after the forty days He stays on earth till His final ascension to heaven.

What was NOT part of the apostles understanding was that this Messiah would not bring to fruition this eternal kingdom while He was alive...they didn't realize there would be two comings of the Messiah...

This Messiah... THE MESSIAH . at this time was not a warrior...He did not come to judge... This Messiah would die on the cross to atone for the sins of man.... Without the consummation of His kingdom...

What Jesus was getting ready to teach them was that there would be a period of time that has been known as a "mystery"..... a period of time when the Messiah would be gone... and there would be an undisclosed period of time between when He leaves and when He returns....

And nobody knows how long that period of time would be.... It's still going on... over 2000 years... and it is during this time that God will shed His saving grace on anyone who will turn to His Son Jesus.... And make Him Lord of their lives.

The disciples were anticipating what theologians call the "Kingdom of Glory"... The eternal kingdom of God.... what they didn't see was what is called the "Kingdom of Grace."....we also call it the "Church Age"...

Just before His final ascension...remember the conversation they have with the risen Jesus?... Acts 1:6-8

6 So, when they had come together, they began asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time that You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"...they are STILL thinking He's going to do it!!! 7 But He said to them, "It is not for you to know periods of time or appointed times which the Father has set by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;...

Now this is important... remember this:

and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth.”

REMEMBER THOSE MARCHING ORDERS!...you are to be MY WITNESSES.

Back to the parable... to educate them more about this Kingdom He tells them this story....
Simple outline for us.... 1. The story 2. What it means...the interpretation by Jesus 3. What it means to us...the application.... this is such a simple parable... a simple story... but boy does it take your mind deep!...and I can only scratch the surface this morning....let's get the details:

1. The Story

Read verse 24

We have a man...a farmer... He goes out into HIS field... remember it is HIS field... and he sows not just seed... but GOOD seed.

Verse 25 **But while his men were sleeping...**these are his workers... apparently quite a few of them suggesting this is a large farm...a wealthy farmer... many of the farms around the Sea of Galilee were small family farms... this is a very large farm.

But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat... and went away.

This farmer had at least one person that did not like him much... his **enemy**... and this enemy comes in at night and sows over the good seed...with tares.... Note that this took a lot of work?...a lot of effort.... this enemy really has it out for this farmer...to go to that extent and expense!

To go out at night.... And oversee this massive plot of land and be out of there before daylight!... this is not an isolated case... if you study Roman history... you will find that this became a common occurrence during the first century....

There were many Roman owned state farms...Romans being hated by most of the natives of the land...the natives would go in at night and oversee their newly planted crops with *zizanium*... translated as “tares”... there are laws on the Roman books against overseeding good crops with weeds!

Zizanium is a kind of darnel... darnel is a weed that resembles wheat in all its stages of growth until the final stage... as it sprouts it looks exactly like wheat... as it grows... it looks exactly like wheat... but when the wheat finally sprouts its head.... Zizanium does not...it's just a worthless weed!

There's a Hebrew word that is believed to be associated with the word Zizanium... it is Zannah... a word found in several places in the Old Testament... Zannah is translated as "harlotry,"... not the word used to indicate a single act of adultery. Instead, it means "sexually wanton," meaning something done repeatedly as a way of life.

So by the time of Jesus telling this story... Zizanium had taken on another name... "Bastard Wheat" ... that explains verse 26

But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares... Zizanium... became evident also.

So the plants are all up... and it becomes apparent there's a problem in the field... there's not just a few bad spots in the field that would be normal... some weeds blown in by the wind... it was apparent that something drastically was wrong with the seed that was sown...there are weeds everywhere!

Verse 27 **The slaves of the landowner came in and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'**

Verse 28 **And he said to them, an enemy has done this!... the slaves said to him... 'do you want us to go and gather them up?'**

That's what should happen right?... go out and pull up all the weeds so the wheat can continue to grow and grow healthy.... These are good workers. ... but the farmer has a good point...I think He knows a lot about tares.

Verse 29 **But he said, "No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them..."** these plants look so similar... and there are so many tares... the field is packed tight... *you may think you are pulling out a tare but it could be the good wheat....*

Verse 30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest... at harvest time the wheat will have fully developed heads on them where the darnel won't.... it will be easy to distinguish between the true wheat and the tares then. And in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers... evidently the reapers will be another group coming in to work... "first gather up the tares and bind them in bundles and burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.

At this point in the parable...I picture the crowd looking at each other as if to say "*so what... that's it??*".... actually no... Jesus goes right into two more short parables... **The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... the kingdom of heaven is like leaven.... have a good day!...** verse 36 tells us **He left the crowds and went into the house.**

So.. that's the story...

All this is taking place on the Sea of Galilee in Capernaum...so the house Jesus most likely went into was Simon Peter's [expound]... **and His disciples came to Him and said 'explain to us the parable of the tares in the field.**

These 12 disciples and the other few have a desire to know what this means... they must be perplexed because Jesus said **The kingdom of heaven is like.. this story**... it seems as though this story is saying... don't go in and destroy the evil...leave it alone.

Their idea of the kingdom of heaven is the Messiah will come in and destroy everything bad,... everything evil... the idea of being passive or patient over evil is not in their imaginations!... if this parable answers the question regarding the three bad soils... what's going to happen to the three soils..... this is a bit confusing.

If you asked the disciples what should happen to the three bad soils... I'm sure they would have said

command fire to come down from heaven and destroy them...why do I say that?... because that is what James and John already said earlier in a different situation... Luke 9:54-55...by the way... this took place right after the argument of *who's going to be the greatest*....the Samaritans wouldn't receive Christ of a visit...

When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"...*this is how we deal with bad people... this is how we deal with people who reject Jesus...* **But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of..."**

2. What it means

Let's see how Jesus explains the parable.

Read verse 37

Jesus identifies the farmer as "**The Son of Man**"... who is the Son of Man?... we could do a week's study on the term "The Son of Man"... Jesus is the Son of Man...Jesus is referred to as the "Son of Man" 82 times in the New Testament... In fact, Son of Man is the primary title Jesus used when referring to Himself....

It's a title of Jesus's humanity and His humility...Jesus while on earth... Jesus is the perfect man... but it also identifies Him as the Messiah...

Daniel 7:13

13 **"I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven**

**One like a son of man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days God the Father
And was presented before Him.**

Luke 22:69

69 But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”

So the Farmer is Jesus... the Messiah... He's sowing the seed... where's He sowing the seed?... I'm blown away by how many commentaries say that Jesus is sowing the seed in the church... that His field is the church... I'm puzzled by this!... here's rule number one in Biblical interpretation: **Read the passage!**

Verse 38 **The field is the world...** this is so important!... the Lord is sowing His seed throughout the world!... the world is His field!... it belongs to Him!... what is the seed that He is sowing in the world?... **and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom...**

Sons of the kingdom are His children... all believers in Christ... If you are in Christ you are a son of the kingdom... you are His seed!... what Jesus is saying is that He is placing His children throughout the world!... and don't miss that **HE'S THE ONE DOING IT!**...

You are where you are because Jesus put you there!... we who are God's children have been planted by Him!... and where did He plant us?... **IN THE WORLD!**... why?... because He wants us in the world!... He wants us in the world's system.

He doesn't want us holed up in some monastery... or some Christian commune... with a big wall around it to keep away the "sinners"... He's not wanting us to create Christian enclaves to protect us from the evil ones....

This tells me that I am not *here* by accident... it tells me **YOU** are not here by accident... God scatters His seed where He wants... **(we think we're the ones making those decisions!)**... it also tells me that I'm supposed to be in the world... *aren't there tares in the world?* (38) **The tares are the sons of the evil one....** So Jesus wants us to live among the sons of the evil one.

Verse 39a **and the enemy who sowed them is the devil...** there's two Sowers of seeds in this one field... the world... Jesus and the Devil... there are only two types of seed in the world... the Sons of God and the Sons of the Evil one... then why does Jesus want us in the world? Among the evil ones?...

1. To mature us and make us into the sons of God He wants us to be.

A world made up of wheat and tares is a tough place... the reason the workers want to remove and burn the tares is because they mess up the field!... the wheat will struggle to grow... the tares

will make life difficult.... John 16:33 says **In this world you will have tribulation but be of good cheer...I have overcome the world!**... we're placed where we are intentionally by God so that we can mature into the person of God He wants us to be.

James 1:1-4

2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2. So that we will influence the world for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Here's where we really get into the parable... WE ARE IN THE WORLD TO INFLUENCE THE TARES OF THE WORLD.... That is the reason we are in the world...that is our purpose!... God put us here not only to perfect us into being the child of God He wants us to be...and that is so we will be able to come through with His mission for us here in this world.... to influence the weeds that are surrounding us...to witness the gospel of Jesus Christ to them.... to become wheat!

Here's a truth we have to get outside the parable... parables can't say everything... but make note of this... every single one of you in this room was once a tare... a zizanium... excuse the crude... "***bastard wheat***".... We were all "bad seed" before we ever became good seed!

I had a discussion awhile back about salvation with one who was a little too much Calvin...a "Hyper-Calvanist...*I never made a decision for Christ.... I was elected and predestined before I was ever created...* that part is true...all of you in Christ were elected and predestined by God... that's a mystery we can't fully grasp how it all works... [You're playing with nuts and bolts you don't have wrenches for!]...basically... you were predestined and elected but nonetheless you were once bastard wheat! *No!!!*

...before you were a son of God you were a son of the devil!... it is through your repentance and through your submission to Jesus Christ A DECISION TO MAKE HIM your Lord and savior... and the blood He shed for YOUR SINS.... that took you from Darnell to good seed!

Remember Nicodemus?... Jesus said to Nicodemus **truly, truly , I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see thekingdom of God!.... that which is born of the flesh is flesh, AND ALL OF US WERE BORN OF THE FLESH!....and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit....**how can I be born of the Spirit?.... **Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again.** Darnel to good seed.

So now... you are to be in the world... amongst the tares to be light... to influence THEM to become the good seeds!

The disciples: *NO!!!! that's not how the kingdom is supposed to go!.... Jesus... being the Messiah you are to destroy the tares!... DO YOU WANT US TO GO PULL OUT THE DARNEL FROM THE WHEAT?... DO YOU WANT US TO DESTROY THE BAD PLANTS?*

***Do you want us to go out and determine the good plants from the bad and get rid of the bad?**...that would sure make the world a better place!...The workers were saying... *Do you want us to go out and judge the sons of the evil one?...do you want US to go out and bundle them all up and burn them?....**

Let's be honest... isn't that what we think as well?... *Jesus... the world is so messed up... so pathetic... so upside down... the wickedness is running rampant everywhere!.... God, let's get rid of all this!...won't you just come down here now and wipe it all out?*

Or... *we need to take control of the world and force our Christian standards on them!... that will turn things around!... we need to take over the government.. take over the cities...create Christian towns.... legislate the Ten Commandments...create a Christian nation....*

You can't force upon the world the Christian life!... bastard wheat has no power in itself to understand any of that!...they must have ears that will hear... and only God can give them those ears...

Jesus says.... **THAT'S NOT YOUR JOB!....**

YOU ARE NOT TO BE THE JUDGES OF THE WORLD....you may judge a tare that will be a wheat! YOU ARE SIMPLY TO BE MY WITNESS TO THE WORLD!.... YOU ARE TO BE THE INFLUENCERS OF THE WORLD!

Jesus says **You leave the weeds to Me!....**

Jesus says not to worry about getting rid of the weeds...if it was up to you all the weeds would be burned up... think of all the weeds that turned to wheat over the last 2000 years of God being patient to judge.....

But judge He will...this kingdom of grace will end and be replaced by His kingdom of glory.... His patience is immense... but it will run out.... So the answer to the question... remember the question?...***what will happen to those three soils?***

Read verses 39b-43

Revelation 19:11-16, **“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. **The armies of heaven were following him**, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**”**

Jesus just expanded their understanding of the coming kingdom of God... (even though they still didn't grasp it)... After Jesus leaves the earth.... He will return.... And all the prophet's prophecies will be fulfilled... but we're not to worry about that time we've got work to do.

Mark says 16:15 **Go into all the world and preach the gospel.**

Matthew says 28:19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.....**

Share the gospel leave the judgement to ME!

3. What this means for us.... application.

You've probably put some things together in your minds...let me give you a few ideas...

1. Realize the importance of the place you occupy in the world.... *“I am a seed in the world... God placed me where I am.... For a reason.”* In school.... At work... in business... in church... with specific friends.... For a reason

It seems like most people I talk to wish they were somewhere else....or doing something else... anything but what they are doing now...maybe we should evaluate those desires....

I get so frustrated at all the tares around me!...GOD PUT YOU THERE!....why?

2. God has called me to do one overarching endeavor.... To influence the world for Jesus.I like what J. Vernon McGee said years ago...[if you don't know who Billy Graham is you won't know who J. Vernon McGee was!...he died 36 years ago but is still on the radio every day!]

“God did not call me to clean the pond...He called me to fish out of it.”

We are to be a redemptive influencer for Jesus Christ.... We are not called to create a Christian Nation.... We are called to share Christ with all nations!

Maybe I should have made the third one first.....

3. If you are a tare.... You need Jesus

In a way there's an invitation in this parable...