

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 “God’s Kingdom vs. Satan’s”

2.19.17

The title of this morning’s message is: “God’s Kingdom versus Satan’s”. Now, eventually we’ll make it to our text in Matthew chapter 13, as we continue in our study of Matthew’s Gospel.

This morning, I want to begin in Isaiah’s prophecy because it will help us to understand better what Jesus is teaching in Matthew’s Gospel.

For those of you who may be new to our study, I want you to understand the mindset of the audience of Matthew’s gospel. The audience for Matthew’s Gospel is Jews. Matthew is writing to the nation of Israel...a nation called “God’s chosen people.” A people who came from a man named Abraham. A man chosen by God through whom the Messiah would come to the world. Why did we need a Messiah? We needed someone to make right what had been lost in the Garden of Eden... What had been lost? The ability to have a relationship with God that was personal...

Why? Because Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. And because of that disobedience sin entered the world and that sin brought separation from God. And that was never His intention. All along God wanted to be with us...His creation. The Bible says God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. But, that closeness of relationship was lost because of sin. And so, God would send His son through the family line of Abraham so as to give the world an opportunity to receive or reject the gift of His son and the gift of eternal life.

You see, for us here today, it’s hard to truly grasp how the Jewish people of Jesus’ day felt as they watched what Jesus was doing in His first year of ministry. No, we’re not Jews yet, it’s important that we understand accurately what they were thinking so we can understand accurately what Matthew is saying.

So, we arrive to Isaiah chapter 2. Let’s get into a Jewish mindset if we can by seeing how Isaiah is going to describe what it will be like to live in Kingdom of Christ.

Isaiah 2:2-5

2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, **3** and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. **4** He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. **5** O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

When you see and hear that term: “house of Jacob,” that’s describing the nation of Israel. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham, through whom the promise was given by God that the nations of the world would be blessed because the Messiah (Jesus) would come from the offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And so, Isaiah says, “Come let us walk in the light of the Lord.” I want you to remember that phrase “walk in the light of the Lord,” because we will return to it shortly.

Make your way to verse 24 and HOLD YOUR PLACE THERE. We’re going to see Jesus is beginning now to explain to His Jewish audience what’s going on. Because they’re confused! They

can't understand what's taking Jesus so long to set up His kingdom! They are ready for Him to judge the nations and to beat their swords into plows and for the House of Jacob to rule and reign in the Light of the Kingdom of the Christ...the Messiah!

You know the Jews had to be thinking: Come on Jesus! Get on with it! What's taking you so long!! Even John the Baptist got so confused and disillusioned he asked, "Jesus, are you the one, or should we look for another?" It seemed to be taking so long!

Well, the time has come for Jesus to explain Himself. It's been a full year of teaching and preaching and healing and performing miracles...and Jesus is finally going to explain what He's doing. And to do so, He's going to use parables. What are parables? They're simply earthly stories that are told to help reveal heavenly truths.

You will remember from last week, Jesus told the first parable about a Sower sowing seed among four kinds of dirt. Remember this summary from last week?

A Sower Went Out to Sow



packed soil



stony ground



thorny ground



good soil

Seed fell on packed soil, stony soil, thorny soil and good soil. $\frac{3}{4}$'s of the seed produced nothing! Only the seed that fell among good soil produced those yellow flowers, indicating fruit.

In other words, Jesus was explaining the reaction of the people over the past year. He was explaining why so many weren't getting it. They were rejecting Him as the Messiah! And now, He's going to explain another facet of what's going to happen before He sets up His final kingdom. Let's watch this play out in verse 24.

Matthew 13:24-30

24 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, **25** but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. **26** So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. **27** And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' **28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' **29** But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'""

Now, I want to go ahead and tell you the summary meaning of this parable and then we can break it down. Here's the gist: Jesus is teaching that good seed and bad seed are going to be sown and yes...they will grow together in this world, just like wheat and weeds, until He comes back again. In other words, there will not be a separation between the followers of Christ and those who reject Him, until the Judgment...which, Jesus describes as the harvest.

Now jump down to verse 36 and let's watch how Jesus explains this parable.

Matthew 13:36

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."

Notice, Matthew records that "He left the crowds." What does that mean? Well, do you remember where Jesus was when He was teaching the crowds? He was in His floating pulpit, right? Here's another artist's depiction I found that I thought was good.



But, He left the crowds on the shoreline of Capernaum and went back into a house. Again, most scholars believe this would have been Peter's house and it was there the disciples came to him. Who were the disciples? Now notice the word in verse 36 is "disciples," not "apostles." Do you remember the difference? A disciple means: "follower of Christ." It can be male or female. Remember, Mary Magdalene was called a disciple and so were Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus (whom Jesus raised from the dead). But, an Apostle were the 12 MEN (males) Jesus handpicked to be His inner circle, if you will.

So, here in Matthew 13, Matthew says, "His disciples" or "followers" followed Him back into Peter's house. These are people who were hungry to know more. So much so, they are packing into Peter's house.

Now church, Peter's house wasn't a stadium or large civic center. No! They've dug up the foundation of that home and it was maybe half the size of this room in square footage. So, thousands of people couldn't get in there. But maybe dozens could. These are people who were absolutely intent on knowing the truth. You see, in my mind this scene is another example of those who were really getting it. Many of those people had to be tired after standing on that seashore. But, that came anyway. They truly had ears to hear and wanted more and they packed the house to hear Jesus explain this parable.

Matthew 13:37-39

37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, **39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.

Okay, this isn't rocket-science. Jesus said this:

The Sower is Jesus

The Wheat represents the followers of Jesus

The Weeds represent those who reject Jesus

The Harvest is the End of the Age

The Reapers are the Angels

The Field is the World

Sometimes people want to say that the field represents the church and that the wheat and weeds represent true Christians versus fake Christians. The problem is: Jesus said, the field is the world, not the church. Bottom line...Jesus is describing to His committed, dedicated followers that they are going to have to get okay with the fact that He's not going to set up His kingdom right now. He's going to allow a season of time where good seed and bad seed grow together. In other words, before His kingdom comes...He is going to allow the good to grow with the bad.

Someone asked the great preacher, J. Vernon McGee one time, "Dr. McGee is the world getting better or getting worse?" His answer: "Both." The questioner said, "Both? How can the world be getting better and worse at the same time, Dr. McGee?" Dr. McGee replied, "Because the wheat is growing and the weeds are growing. So, the world is getting better because the wheat is growing and it's getting worse because the weeds are growing." He went on to say: "As for me, I simply prefer to focus on the wheat."

Isn't that good. You see, Jesus is describing THIS dispensation of time... He's describing this age that we call the Church Age or Age of Grace. Which is a season of time where people are given time to choose whether they will receive Him or reject Him. And we know Satan will do all that he can to deceive people into rejection and he'll then sow those people in amongst the good. And sometimes it's really, really hard to tell the good from the bad.

You see, the weeds were a type of plant called "darnel." This was a type of weedy, rye grass that would eventually expose poisonous, black seeds. But in its early growth, the weeds (sometimes called TARES) looked like wheat. Take a look...



Since they look almost identical...Jesus said, "Don't do anything with them until the harvest." In other words, Jesus was teaching in essence that eventually you'd be able to tell the difference between the true and the false. Eventually those weeds would expose those little darker seeds and you'd be able to tell the difference. See...



Do you know who this reminds me of? I mentioned him last week...



Judas was a fake wasn't he? He betrayed Jesus with a kiss. What a weed!!! In the end, he showed his true colors. He was a fake! A weed!

What are YOUR TRUE COLORS? Are you truly a follower of Jesus or are you a fake? Are you wheat or a weed? It will be revealed in your life what you really are. If you are a fake, it will eventually show up in your life and you'll produce dark seeds and the terrible thing about all of this is the AWFULNESS of what will happen to you. Take a look at this picture... Here's a farmer...



She's burning her field to encourage growth in the future because she's removing competition from any weeds. She's burning the weeds and that's what Jesus said would happen...

Matthew 13:40-42

40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, **42** and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You see, one day, our lives will end and the truth of who we are will be revealed. The Lord's angels will separate the weeds from the wheat. The true from the false. The good from the evil. The Angels of heaven will gather all of the fakes...the evil doers and even the moral people...all of those who refused to receive Jesus by faith...and they will bundle them all together...the atheists, the hypocrites the liars and thieves, murderers and sexually immoral...those who give to the poor and feed the hungry...but don't have Jesus...anyone who has chosen to reject Jesus... they'll be thrown into the Lake of Fire for all eternity. Isn't that terrible?

But, you see... they had their chances to accept Jesus...but, they refused! Therefore, they will pay the consequences of their decision. And did you notice that last phrase?

Matthew 13:42b

...In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You say, "Of course...that's because of all the pain. They'll be burning and they are crying and smashing their teeth together because they're hurting." Well, I can understand that to be true. But, Matthew Henry, the great Bible Commentator says there's more. He says, the weeping and gnashing of teeth is "because of a comfortless sorrow because of an incurable indignation at God."

Translated: They hate God! They are so mad at God that they are weeping and gnashing their teeth at Him because they can't fathom that God did this to them! But, God didn't do it to them. He sent them Jesus... but they rejected Him. No...they did this to themselves and there's no way out. This will be their destiny

for all eternity... forever, and ever, and ever and ever for billions and zillions and quadrillions upon quadrillions of years!

Oh don't let that be you! You'll have the opportunity today to be saved!

I don't want to end here. It's too frightening! And I'm glad I won't have to... because Jesus didn't end here. We have one more verse.

Matthew 13:43

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

I like that. The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom! "Shine like the sun!" Remember that? Remember Isaiah's prophecy?

Isaiah 2:5

5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Walk in the light of the Lord... When will that be? Well, Jesus said it would be at the end of the age. When is that? This age...the Church Age...the Age of Grace that the Jews couldn't see.

Listen, the end of this age of Grace will usher in the removal of the righteous from this earth...that's the Church. We'll be taken to heaven by Jesus in what is called the Rapture. In a moment in the twinkling of an eye...and that could happen at any time. And then the earth will endure a season of time known as the Tribulation and it will be horrible for those left behind. But then, Jesus will return to the earth and set up His 1000 year millennial reign and then, the New Jerusalem will come down out of a new heaven and this earth will be refined by fire and made new and we will live with Jesus forever.

Can you park your brain around that? Have you thought about it lately? Most of us don't think about heaven much. But, I want you to think about it. I want you to be reminded by hearing the words of Romans 8. Take a look on the screens...

Romans 8:18-23

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

I love that...we wait eagerly...eagerly for what? Heaven? No. Vacation... Retirement. Promotion... Graduation... A new job... A new boyfriend! Heaven? The place where we'll shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father? Could we ponder heaven for a moment? See it again...

Matthew 13:43

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

Well, as we close today, I want you to hear something. I'm going to ask you to bow your heads and close your eyes and listen to an orchestra piece written by Michael W. Smith while I read something I've simply titled: Heaven. And I want you to try to focus on this place Jesus describes as His kingdom, where the "righteous" (that's the saved...that's followers of Jesus) will be.

Would you please bow your heads and close and try to imagine heaven.

Heaven

Try with me now to imagine what heaven...God's Kingdom. Will you let your mind run free with thoughts that are almost too wonderful to put into words? Emotions that will be so immense...well...they go beyond human description!

Why is it that we don't think more often about heaven? Is it because we're too busy to sit still before the Lord and wait on Him and contemplate his awesome power? Is it that we're afraid to allow our limited imaginations to dream about the place we long for—the place we hope for—and the place that Jesus died to give us? Maybe it's because we think they're aren't enough details in the Bible about Heaven—or that we can't comprehend it all—so why even try.

Well, why don't we try? You see, I believe God has given us majestic glimpses into His glory from the Bible: streets of gold as pure as glass—walls of Jasper—gates of pearl—and the River of Life flowing from the throne of God Himself.

We know about Heaven from Jesus' own words. "Let not your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me...for in my Father's house are many rooms, and if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself so that where I am, there you may be also."

Think of it...being escorted to the gates of the city. How do you think you'll you feel? Excited—overjoyed—absolutely awed! YES! You know all your hopes and dreams about this place are going to be realized right now before your very eyes. You're finally going to see it... **And then it happens**, those gates of pearl swing open wide and there before you is the kingdom of God in all of its grandeur and splendor. Everything is shining in glory and exalted brilliance—more beautiful than anything you've ever seen. Words can't describe what you now behold with your eyes!

And then you see them...there they are... There's Grandma and Grandpa, your Aunt...your Uncle, and for some... it's "Momma and Daddy!" And there's your dear friend who died of cancer, your child that died in the womb...why they're all there, now running toward you with open arms welcoming you to YOUR eternal home with them. And you celebrate...jumping up and down...hugging...shouting with your head tossed back in unspeakable joy! You shout: Hallelujah!!

And then, you see someone else walking toward you... Could it be? YES, it's Him—it's the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords...it's the Prince of Peace, the Eternal one Himself in all of His brilliance. It's Jesus and you fall to your face and begin to worship Him. And then...He slowly lifts you to your feet and calls you by name, and says: "Well done good and faithful servant...welcome home, my child."

It all makes sense to you now. Those times of questioning why a good God would allow that tragedy to happen you. All the trials and all the struggles...it was all part of God's plan. And now you can rest. Your job is done. You're Home!

So, dear child of God, don't you quit serving—it'll all be worth it. Don't get hung up on the stuff of this world...for this life is but a vapor. See it through to the finish. Serve Jesus with all you've got...for one day you'll see Him and this place He's prepared for you: the Kingdom of Heaven!