Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds – Week 4

Guiding principles to keep in mind while studying the parables:

General principles of interpretation

- Understand that the Bible is written **for us** but **not to us.**
- Use the clearer scriptures to interpret the less clear.

Parables teach a primary lesson or truth

- Parables are illustrations thrown along side of the message being taught.
- Identify the central truth of each parable. Its various characters may present different perspectives that deepen that truth.

Purpose of the Parables: Matt 13: 10-13

- ***v10:*** *Then the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "**Why do You speak to the people in parables**?".* ***v11:*** *He replied, "The knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.*
- Why? Because the Jewish people as a whole failed to submit to Jesus as the promised Messiah
    - **v12:** Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. (that which has been given by the Spirit under the new covenant).
    - **V12:** Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. (that which they had from the Mosaic/Old covenant – the shadows).
- **Thus, the Judgement v13:** *This is why I speak to them in parables: 'Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.'*
- **Matt 21: 43** *Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.*

The Context - Judgement

This parable appears only in the gospel of Matthew and follows Jesus' condemnation of the Jewish leaders who not only failed to recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah but called the Spirit within him the devil.

Judgement Unfolding

- **Matt 12:31**: *Therefore, I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.*
- **Matt 12:36:** *I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,*
- **Matt 12:39:** *An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign*

Kingdom Membership

- **Matt 12: 48** *But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"*

The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

What is the plain reading of the parable?

The parable starts out saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to…

- **So, the questions are:**
  - How does this parable reflect the kingdom of heaven?
  - And how does the Kingdom of God differ from what was expected by the Israelites?

Kingdom Expected by the Israelites

- What was the expectation of the Jewish people?
- The kingdom hope was in the forefront of the minds of the Israelites, but why might it have been of even greater urgency when it came to Jesus?
  - What was John the Baptist's message?

Characters

Parable	**Explanation**
Sower	Son of Man
Field	World
Good Seed	People of the kingdom
Enemy	Devil
Weeds	People of the evil one
Owner's Servants	
Harvesters	Angels

The Field

- The field is the world, not the church. Though the lesson should be applied within the church as well but our rush to judgement of the world is what the Lord is calling us to temper.
- Remember parable of the Good Samaritan - the Priest and Levite felt justified in leaving the mortally wounded Samaritan to his fate.
- We have a natural tendency for comparison leading to judgement. It is this tendency that Jesus is addressing in this parable.

The Owner's Servants

- **Who are they?** <u>They are us</u> – the ones rushing to judgement. Examples"
  - Luke 9:51-55: Samaritans do not receive Jesus.
  - Judges 20: Israelite war against Benjamin
  - Jonah 4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry.
- We must recall, we have no basis to recommend ourselves to God.
  - Righteous pagans – unbelievers who look the part better than us.

    - Dirty Christians – believers who don't look the part.
- The Father has called his children from before the foundation of the world – but we don't know who is elect and who is not.
- We preach God's promises to all people: **Rom 10:13:** *Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

The Weeds

- The type of weed is called darnel, which looks very similar to wheat even after it has budded
- The master allows them to grow along side of the wheat – why?
    - **Matt 13:29 lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.**
- The point **is not** that there are weeds in the church.
    - That is the view of the servants who wanted to get rid of the weeds asap.
- We **don't want to** respond to this parable by trying to look like wheat
    - No one looked better than the Pharisees…
- The point is that the wheat can sometimes look like weeds – so beware **of yourself** and do no harm.
- **Isaiah 65:5** who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you." These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day.

The Good Seed, The Kingdom of Heaven

- A primary theme in the parables is that the kingdom of God does not look like or grow like the kingdoms of the world.
    - **Luke 17:20-21:** The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, Look, here it is! or There! for behold, <u>the kingdom of God is within you.</u>
- **Kingdom of Heaven vs Kingdoms of the world**
    - The kingdoms of the world overcome their enemies by compulsion - war.
    - The kingdom of God overcomes its enemies by the love of God, the cross
    - Subjects of the kingdoms of the world may serve out of fear
    - Subjects of the kingdom of God love their King (though they once hated him).

<u>The great work of God is changing the heart of his enemies</u>

God could easily destroy his enemies by the power of his hand – but with mankind, He has chosen a more glorious way of dealing with his enemies.

- Rom 5:10: while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son
- We are called to seek the blessing of those God has placed in our lives.

Judgement

We are not qualified to judge

- Jesus assures us that judgement is coming, and the righteous will be vindicated but not yet.
- Do we frown when God surprises us with his mercy towards others?
- Are we surprised by the Bible's description of Lot as righteous? Samson? Noah? David?
- Weeping and gnashing of teeth – anger.
- Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.