

MBC – 6/26/2022 – Pastor Doug Thompson  
**“The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds”**  
 Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

We will take a one week break from Galatians this morning because I want to look at a passage where our Lord Jesus gives us the big picture. Matthew ch.13. Jesus is giving the parables of the kingdom. The purpose of these parables was to explain to His Disciples what we can expect life to be like in this world until He returns. We’re going to look at the parable of the wheat and the weeds—

- <sup>24</sup>He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, <sup>25</sup>but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup>So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. <sup>27</sup>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?’ <sup>28</sup>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?’ <sup>29</sup>But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup>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.’”
- Matthew 13:36–43 <sup>36</sup>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.” <sup>37</sup>He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup>and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.
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This is interesting: Jesus’ disciples followed Him into the house and said, “Explain to us the parable of the *weeds*.” Now isn’t this a parable about *wheat* and weeds – good and evil in the world? But what stuck in their minds was the weeds.

- That’s human nature, isn’t it? You don’t hear people say, “Why is there so much good in the world? Where did all of this beauty come from – explain that, Christian!” Instead people complain: “Why is there evil in the world? Why so much bad stuff?” Even Christians ask that question.

Well, there is evil, horrible evil. And not just what we call “natural disasters” like fires, floods and earthquakes, but humans created in God’s image doing unspeakable evil to other humans: Like what’s been happening in Ukraine, the recent mass shootings, and none of that compares with what happened over the last 50 years in this country since Roe vs. Wade and the slaughter of over 60 million unborn babies - intentionally, brutally murdered, in the womb. And on top of that now is the outrage of the pro-abor- tionists that the slaughter might be curtailed!

And at the root of all of it is rage against God, our Creator—

- Psalm 2:1–2 <sup>1</sup>Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed – His Christ.

\*Janice and I took a drive the other day down Spruce Grove Rd. and we saw horses, goats, cows, deer, wild turkeys – and it occurred to me: all of these creatures bring glory to God – just by their happy existence. None of them rebel against their Creator – only fallen angels and fallen men!

In this parable, Jesus tells us it's going to be like this: there will be good and evil in His Kingdom until He returns – and specifically He is talking about people. He tells us how His followers are to respond, and then He tells us how it's all going to end. Amazing. Every Christian needs to understand what our Lord says here to understand the times we are in. Well let's dig in—

### **I. The secrets of the kingdom.**

In v.10, the disciples were perplexed at the way He was teaching. They asked Jesus, “*Why do you speak to them in parables?*” And Jesus replied, v.11: “To you it has been given to know the *secrets of the kingdom of heaven.*” Your Bible might say “mysteries.” I’ve said before that in the New Testament this word, really means the opposite of our word *mystery*. It means a divine truth that was previously hidden or veiled, but is now made clear in the NT through revelation—at least to those who have ears to hear. All of Jesus’ parables in Matthew 13, reveal different aspects about the kingdom of God that had not been understood before. *The kingdom was not going to be like what they expected.* At least not until Jesus returns. And the first thing He reveals is that—

#### ***A. The kingdom is here – but not yet.***

Before we look at our parable, turn with me to—

- Luke 17:20–21 <sup>20</sup>Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, <sup>21</sup>nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

What did the Jews at the time of Jesus expect? The kingdom of God would come in like gang-busters, with Messiah leading a conquering army, Rome would be overturned, Israel would be vindicated and all her enemies destroyed. And Jesus says, “No. The kingdom of God is here, in the midst of you.” What did He mean? He meant, I am here! I am the King, so the kingdom has arrived – yoo-hoo, it’s right in front of your eyes!” He said that back in—

- Matthew 12:28 <sup>28</sup>But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, [yes, it is] then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

But there are other passages that make it clear that the kingdom is still future—

- Luke 22:18 <sup>18</sup>For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine *until* the kingdom of God comes.”

So Jesus said that the Kingdom was already in their midst, but that it was still coming, He even told us to pray for His kingdom to come, right?

Here is the solution – and this is one of those *mysteries*: the kingdom is here, but there is more to come. It is fulfilled in Jesus, but not yet consummated. It's already, but not yet. So there is—

### ***B. One kingdom in two phases.***

The first phase of the kingdom is the present age we live in, it's been called the church age, the New Covenant era – it's from Pentecost to the Parousia = Christ's return. And during this first phase of the kingdom, *the King is reigning from heaven*, not earth! Look with me at another time when Jesus blew the minds of His followers with this mystery revealed—

- Luke 19:11–12 <sup>11</sup>As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. <sup>12</sup>He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return."

"OK, we're coming into Jerusalem, Jesus has been claiming to be the Messiah, get ready for heads to roll!" Jesus says, no. He is that nobleman, right? And He is returning to heaven, via the cross and resurrection to receive a kingdom, and then return. Until then, He tells His disciples to "engage in business, 'til I return," i.e., keep watching, waiting and serving until He returns, because He is their King and He is now ruling over His kingdom from heaven. Right now—

- Hebrews 1:3 . . . he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high—and what is He doing there?--
- 1 Corinthians 15:25 <sup>25</sup>For He must *reign* until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

Jesus is reigning over His people right now, from heaven, but there is more to come. In 1 Cor.15.23 we read that at His coming, all of His people will be raised from the dead—

- 1 Corinthians 15:24 <sup>24</sup>Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

So now our High King of Heaven is ruling His kingdom from heaven, this is phase 1. Phase 2 is when the King returns to rule over the consummated kingdom on a new heaven and new earth. During phase 1, He is saving His people and bringing them into His kingdom—

- Colossians 1:13 <sup>13</sup>He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

At the *end* of this age—

- Matthew 13:41 <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of *his* kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,

Then comes the next age, the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Kingdom, and look at how Jesus refers to it—

- Matthew 13:43 <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in *the kingdom of their Father*. He who has ears, let him hear.

Wow. Just let all of this settle for a minute. From our point of view, the world is in upheaval, chaos – the world powers are moving the chess pieces and everyday the game is different: now America is on top, now Russia, maybe tomorrow it's China . . . What if Iran gets the nuke? But beloved, Jesus is our High King of Heaven, He is ruling and reigning, right now, from heaven. And when He is ready, He will return and take over. And you can go to the bank on that.

But Jesus' disciples must have been in a daze! First phase, second phase – this was all new to them. I love what we read after Jesus had given all of these parables. He asked His men—

- Matthew 13:51 <sup>51</sup>“Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.”

Right!

So now let's see what this parable of “the wheat and the weeds” tells us about this two-phase kingdom: During the first phase (i.e., the time we are in right now – until Jesus returns), Messiah Jesus will be reigning from heaven and the world will be a battlefield with two opposing kings, and two opposing armies.

Phase 2 happens at the return of Christ, the harvest, when He will finally make a clear separation between the sons of His kingdom and the sons of the evil one. Until then, good and evil will grow together, side by side, intermingled. And nothing is going to change this. And Jesus says, “Don't even try. Be patient. Wait for the final harvest.”

Wow. That was a mindblower for those Jewish disciples. It's still a mindblower, right? So let's break it down and first look at—

## II. The Sower and the good seed.

- Matthew 13:24 <sup>24</sup>He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,
- Matthew 13:37–38 <sup>37</sup>He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.

This parable has some similarities with the parable of the sower and the soils earlier in the chapter – but it's actually very different: In the first parable, the seed is the Gospel, but in this parable, the seed are believers. In the first parable, the first three soils represented unbelievers and the fourth soil represented believers. In this parable, Jesus picks up where the first one left off and deals with those believers: now *they* are the good seed sown in His field.

\*So if you are a Christian, you are *in* this parable. You are the good seed that He has sown in this world. In His first parable He says that until He returns, you go out proclaiming the seed of the Gospel. And at the end of this parable, when He returns, He will gather out all of His elect seed out of the world. So Jesus puts His people into the world to sow the seed of the Gospel to gather more of His elect, until He

returns. And that is the reason history continues. Last week we talked about Redemptive History – God’s plan to save His people – when that plan is complete, Jesus returns for phase 2 of His kingdom—

- Matthew 24:14 <sup>14</sup>And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and *then* the end will come.

And where is this sowing taking place?

### III. The field.

Notice in v.24, “a man who sowed good seed in *His* field.” It’s His field. It belongs to Him. And what is it? Look at v.38: “The field is the world.” So who owns the world? Jesus Christ. Didn’t He tell His disciples, “*all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me?*” What does He say next? “GO, therefore!” I.e., “Because I own the world and all that is in it, I command you to go out proclaiming Me as Lord and Savior.”

This is bedrock doctrinal truth: Jesus owns the field = He is Lord of all. We don’t go out and ask people if they would like to *make* Jesus their Lord. He *is* Lord of their lives, *therefore* they are commanded to bow the knee and worship Him. Jesus made this clear in His high-priestly prayer—

- John 17:2 (praying to His Father) <sup>2</sup>since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

You see the distinction: Jesus is Lord over all, but only Savior to those the Father has given Him, who were elect before time began.

So Jesus owns the field, and the field is the *world* – it’s not the church. Many people get this wrong. The world, then, is full of good and bad seed.

### IV. The good and evil, side by side.

- <sup>26</sup>So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. <sup>27</sup>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?’ <sup>28</sup>He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’

- <sup>38</sup>. . . The weeds are the sons of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.

The word for weeds is an interesting Gk. word: *zizania*, it referred to the *bearded darnel* which looks like grass or wheat until it is fully grown. And the seeds of this plant are poisonous. So to deliberately sow these weeds in someone’s field was a wicked thing to do. It was illegal under Roman law to do what this enemy did because it could ruin a field for seasons to come.

\*So here is another mystery revealed about this present age: there will be two ‘sowers,’ Jesus and the Devil, sowing two different crops; and the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one will be side by side until the King returns. So the world will be like a battlefield with two opposing forces – but the troops are mingled together, and some of the sons of the evil one are even wearing our uniforms!

- Jesus' sows, and Satan is right behind Him, sowing. Jesus' followers preach the Gospel; the devil's followers preach a counterfeit message, humanism, evolution, false religions. And as we see in the parable of the sower and the seed, Satan does everything he can to snatch up the Gospel seed before it can even be understood.
- \*Don't we see that all around us? Satan's seed hates the truth: they rage against it – they want to suppress the truth, stamp it out – change the meaning of words – even create confusion about the two genders God created! And when we wonder how people can be so crazy we need to remember: "the enemy who sowed them is the devil." This is a spiritual battle against an enemy who hates and seeks to destroy the truth.

So who are these "sons of the evil one?" Who are they? The Apostle John divided all of mankind into just two groups—

- 1 John 3:10 <sup>10</sup>By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother

When Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees He said—

- John 8:44 <sup>44</sup>You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

Understand that the sons of the evil one are not just false teachers, or atheists or really bad people – they are anyone who doesn't love and follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. These are the weeds planted by the devil to poison and disrupt the work of Christ and His good seed in this world. Do you get that? They are not neutral according to Jesus. "*He who is not for Me is against Me and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.*" And to follow the parable, they are those who will be gathered up at the harvest and thrown into the fiery furnace. All those who die in unbelief. Wow. It's almost impossible to wrap our minds around this.

- So for the rest of human history, good and evil will exist, side-by-side until the judgment, and they will both be growing – making parallel progress, that's what Jesus says. If it seems that evil people are getting worse and worse, that's true! But it's also true that the church of Jesus Christ is growing – in parallel – bringing in God's people from every nation, tribe, and tongue. *God* defeats *Roe v. Wade* through the prayers of His people. His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and heaven – that's what we see in the parables of the mustard seed and leaven.

So what are God's people supposed to do about the bad seed in the world?

- Matthew 13:28 . . . So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'

"Master, do you want us to declare war on the weeds!" "Boys, get yer Hudson sprayers, yer Roundup, and let's go!" The King and the kingdom are here so it's time to rumble. That was the disciples' mindset. Do you remember the time they were turned away from entering Samaria?

- Luke 9:54 <sup>54</sup>And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

Or when Peter literally took out his sword and tried to take off a man's head to defend Jesus? Luckily his aim was bad and he only got an ear, and Jesus put that back on.

And mis-guided Christians throughout history have thought that they were doing the Lord's work by taking out unbelievers – the crusades come to mind. But even John Calvin agreed to the death of a heretic named Michael Servetus. That's the way of Islam, "convert or die," it's not the way of Christ. We are to love our enemies, not kill them.

Ridding your garden of weeds is good agriculture, but it's not the way of Christ's kingdom—

- Matthew 13:29 <sup>29</sup>But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.

What rld did Jesus mean, that if we go around trying to pull up the weeds we might uproot the wheat too?

- Now before we see what Jesus meant, we need remind ourselves that **the field is the world**, not the church, right? When people make the church the field here, they make Jesus say that in the church we shouldn't try to sort out the wheat from the weeds. But that's wrong – in the church we are commanded to make a distinction between wheat and weeds.

Let me explain: Isn't anyone and everyone welcome to come to MBC? Oh, Yes! We are all sinners here, and there is always room for more – so we're glad you came this morning. But the true church is only the wheat: born again believers who love Jesus and repent of their sins. They are the only ones we are to consider as part of the church. If a person calls himself or herself a believer, and identifies with this church, but they are living in unrepentant sin, Jesus commands us to lovingly go to that person, and urge them to repent, and if they don't, we are to put them out – then they are not welcome to identify with this fellowship. Paul instructed the reluctant Corinthians to do this very thing—

- 1 Corinthians 5:9–12 <sup>9</sup>I wrote to you in my letter not to *associate* (intermingle) with sexually immoral people— <sup>10</sup>not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. [I.e., in the world, expect wheat and weeds, and associate with the weeds!]
- <sup>11</sup>But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. [I.e., Regardless of what this man claims – and by the way, he was apparently sleeping with his stepmother – he is living like a weed, not wheat, so make a distinction so that the world can see the truth about the Gospel, not a lie! And how is the church to do this?]—
- 1 Corinthians 5:5 <sup>5</sup>you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Paul says, "Put this person back into Satan's domain. Put them back out into the field = the world; with the prayer that they will come to their senses and be saved!

All that to say: when Jesus says to leave the weeds alone, **He means in the world, not in the church.** We are to be associating with weeds in the world, and we welcome all the weeds we can hold in here so that they will hear the seed of the Gospel and become wheat – children of the kingdom!

- So what did Jesus mean when He said ‘leave the weeds alone, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them?’

Notice that it’s for the sake of the wheat that we leave the weeds alone. It’s to our harm if we try to up-root the weeds before the harvest. We just have to trust our sovereign, all-wise God that it is *best* for us – hard as that might be for us to believe – it is *best* for us that wicked people remain in this world – for now. They are part of the way God is causing all things to work together for good for His people, or they wouldn’t be here! Can I get an amen? No?

- Let me ask you: Has God ever used a wicked, godless person for good in your life? To stretch your faith and make you more like Christ? You know He has! What would your life look like if all of the difficult people were removed?
- And it is a fact that where Christians are persecuted by the sons of the evil one, the church grows and is purified. Patrick Johnstone, in his tremendous work on world missions, *Operation World*, says that “in countries that have endured severe suffering evangelical Christianity is growing at its greatest rates, while growth curves in the indulgent West are nearly flat.”

So God is saying to His people in this parable: “Trust Me, you are better off now with them than you would be without them!” Do you believe what Jesus is saying?

- And let me give you another reason not to rid the world of evil people: that weed that you want to eradicate might just well be God’s wheat that just hasn’t germinated yet! Isn’t that right? Everyone of us here was a weed before Christ transformed us into His wheat!

This is why we are to love all people and honor them, and not hate them or persecute them – because they might one day be your brother or sister in Christ!

- But Jesus forbids us from going on a crusade to pull up the weeds. Yes, we speak against evil, and we have a *duty* to seek to eradicate some evils, like abortion. But we don’t kill abortion doctors, and we shouldn’t even hate them. There are abortion doctors and Planned Parenthood Directors (e.g. Abby Johnson) who have come to Jesus Christ and had their sins forgiven! “Such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God!”

The Lord Jesus didn’t sow His children into this world to be the weed police. We’ve got our hands full dealing with sin in our own lives and in the church, don’t we? Our job isn’t to go around pulling up the weeds in the world but to keep sowing the seed of the Gospel until the harvest. Jesus doesn’t send us out as detectives, but as evangelists.

\*This is profound: our mission in this world is primarily positive – not negative. There is an old proverb that says “It’s better to light a candle than to curse the darkness” – and didn’t Jesus say, “*let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven*”?



## V. The Harvest.

Here is the punchline of this parable—

- Matthew 13:30 <sup>30</sup>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.”
- <sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup>and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Here is the solution to the so-called problem of evil: It’s temporary, to serve *God’s* purposes, and one day, God will put an end to evil and evil creatures forever. And until then, expect evil to grow worse and worse, and also expect that God’s Kingdom will expand and grow, and Christ will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it!

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So what are the lessons we learn from this simple, amazing parable?

1.) Be patient until the harvest. The devil may be sowing in God’s field but I want you to know that he is a trespasser. God hasn’t lost control. God hasn’t relinquished one bit of his sovereignty. Sometimes you and I feel like the weeds are taking over. They are getting the upper hand! That will not happen. “His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o’er earth and heav’n. The keys to death and hell are to our Jesus giv’n.”

- Psalm 37:7–9 <sup>7</sup>Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! <sup>8</sup>Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. <sup>9</sup>For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

Beloved, our heavenly Father is on His throne. You and I can wait until the harvest for everything to get sorted out. Remember what James said—

- James 5:7–8 <sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

2.) Until then, God’s people are to be *out among* the world! We aren’t to root out the weeds before it’s time, but neither are we to gather the wheat into the barn! It doesn’t matter how godly you and your family are if they are isolated from the world. Jesus said that we are salt of the *earth*, so the salt needs to get out of the saltshaker and into the world! We are to be redemptively involved with the sons of the evil ones, but radically different. That is our constant challenge. In the world but not of the world. And every one of us need to ask the Spirit to search our hearts here: Are we making contact with the world? But are we salt and light to the world? Like Jesus?

3.) Our job description in this evil world, filled with evil people is primarily positive, not negative. We are to be more about shining the light rather than trying to put out the darkness. Do you understand that? God will take care of the weeds, our concern is to make Christ known to them. We all do that in different ways with our different gifts and different callings, but how are you doing that?

4.) Are you wheat or a weed? Have you come into the kingdom of light and love and life, ruled by Jesus Christ? If you haven't, you are still in the domain of darkness, and you are ruled by Satan. And unless you repent and trust in Jesus Christ before the harvest comes, Satan will be your ruler for the rest of eternity – and you heard what awaits you. Do not die in your sins! Jesus invites you to come to Him and be forgiven of all your sins, receive eternal life, and know that soon, you will shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father! How can you refuse that offer to hold on to your miserable sins – or your pride? Come to Jesus this morning!