

**Harris Creek Sermon Transcript**  
**“The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds”**  
**Derek Davidson**  
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Hello, everyone, my name is Derek Davidson, and I'm the Youth Minister at Harris Creek and it's a privilege to serve this church alongside an awesome staff. They're actually in this room. We miss you guys; we can't wait to see you soon. Let me just talk about my quarantine for a little bit. I had my first Father's Day in June. And it was fun, but what was a little bit different about my first Father's Day was we had four kids in the house, here's a picture of our family. And you may be wondering, "Does he have emoji children?" No, I do not, my wife and I are actually foster parents, so we can't show you the pictures of our kids. But we have a 7-year-old, a 5-year-old, a 3-year-old, and a 3-month-old. And being a parent has been really fun, I get to play lots of really fun roles. Kids are awesome. I've become a DJ for the first time, but my soundtracks are exclusively Moana and Trolls. I know, parents, you know what I'm talking about. I get to decide when the floor becomes lava or not, that's a really big role in our house. I've also become the master toy repairman, but my tools are only duct tape and super glue cause that's all I know how to use. But there's one role that I've had to play that I wish I'd gone to law school for, and that is the role of judge. Because what I didn't understand until the kids came in our house is the first rule about toys for kids is that there's no toy more valuable than the toy that your sibling has. It doesn't matter, I promise you it doesn't matter, you could have the coolest Spiderman figurine in the world and your sister has a cheap, plastic Easter egg—the Easter egg is what you want. You could have a brand-new football, and your brother has a cheap tennis ball—it's the tennis ball you want. And this plays out most often in our home with Legos. In our home, we love Legos, there's so many adventures, so many things you can do. And it's great, until one of them finds one of these: a Lego figurine. Seems pretty innocent, I know. But I promise you in our home when our kids start rummaging through a bin, they're building things, and one of them finds one of these, you would've thought they'd found one of the Infinity stones, because World War III breaks out in our home, I promise. So at that point, my wife, Kellie, and I have to step in. We hear both sides of the case, and we have to render our judgment, no retrials, no appeals. And I tell you that story today, one, for your sympathy and prayers. I appreciate it, we have four kids. And two, because Jesus is telling us a story today that involves a judgment. And it's really important for us to know who the Judge is, because if we don't, we may try to focus on the wrong thing and play the wrong role. We're in this series, Summer of Stories, where we are looking closely at some of Jesus' parables. If you haven't learned this yet, a parable is simply a story that Jesus tells to make a point, and He taught often in parables. He wanted to illustrate to His followers the lessons He wanted them to learn. And with parables, I think it's really easy to try to make parables say more than they're trying to say. We can try to make them answer every question about life in one parable, and that's not the point, they're not supposed to do that. And today we're looking at the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds, which is in Matthew 13. It may be

in your Bible as the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. And the thing I specifically don't want you to get hung up on today is whether the wheat and the weeds can change, that's not the point of this story. In this story, Jesus is telling us about a judgment that is coming and about playing our role in the coming Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God, what does that mean, it's a pretty big phrase. Matthew sometimes refers to that as the Kingdom of Heaven, which we'll see in this parable. And the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven is the rule of God over the people of God in the midst of this world., the rule of God over the people of God in the midst of this world. When we become Christians, we declare to the world that we no longer belong to this world. We declare to the world that we belong to a different kingdom, a different King. And then we live as members of that kingdom. What is our role in that? This parable will tell us that today, and it's important today for us to hear because we are all tempted to try to play roles that aren't ours to play. I mean, just think about the last sports game that you watched with a friend, which I know feels like fifteen years ago right now—it wasn't, it was about four months ago. We all love to play coach from the couch. We all love to play Monday morning quarterback. I know my coaches are nodding their head[s]. But we're not the coach, we're not the quarterback, we're not set up to play that role. Our role is a fan. And one of the main reasons Jesus told this parable is so we would not try to play God's role in His kingdom. As we are looking at this story, there are three things we'll specifically talk through: 1) there's an enemy, 2) we have a judge, and 3) we have a role. Our text for today is Matthew 13:24-30, and then we'll skip to 36-43. You can read along with me: "Jesus told them another parable: (He had just told them the parable of the soils, which JP taught on at the beginning of the summer. Great sermon, go back and look at it.) 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. (This was a very direct conversation.) The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'" So, a big part of teaching parables, they're analogies, we have to figure out who is which character in this story, and that's a really hard thing to do. There's been commentaries written about parables, theologians argue about who each role was supposed to be. So, I decided to skip all that this morning and I decided to pick a parable that Jesus explains for us. You can call this the SparkNotes of Scripture. Thank You, God. Going forward to 36, "Then he left the crowd ("he" being Jesus) and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.' (Explain what you just told all them.) Jesus answered, 'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the

harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear." So, to make sure we are clear as we are looking at the roles in this story, the sower is Jesus. The good seed, the wheat, are God's people. The enemy is the Devil, all the sin that he has sown in this world. The weeds are the people that the Devil has sown in this world, and the harvesters are the angels. And the roles and the characters are really important for us to know so we don't miss what Jesus is saying here, which leads me to my first point: we have an enemy. We have an enemy. Jesus says that twice, let's look at verses 27 and 28: "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied." And then later on, Jesus says, "The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil." He wants to make it really clear so we don't miss it. We have an enemy. And we can't be naïve to this; there is an enemy, and he is active in our world. The Devil wants to steal, kill, and destroy. He is the prince of lies. He seeks to get us to grasp for God's role like he did with Adam and Eve, and he is real. And this helps answer the question of the problem of evil. Where do bad things come from? God, why are there wicked people? God, why is there racism? God, why are there viruses that kill people? Jesus, why? Because we have an enemy. And because of that there is going to be brokenness in our world. See, Jesus' audience, the Israelites of the day, they were curious about one thing in particular. They thought when the Messiah came, that he would take out the ruling power of that day, and he would put the Jewish people back in charge of the land that God had given them. And at this time, the ruling power was the Romans. If you haven't watched "The Chosen," you should. The director brilliantly displays this point, what people were asking of Jesus. So, Jesus is trying to make clear—the enemy is the devil, it's not the Romans. And as Paul later says in Ephesians 6, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Don't focus on the weeds: focus on the enemy. And don't be surprised by the presence of the weeds in this world. How relevant is that for today? We want to focus on the weeds. We want to focus on the people that we think are bad, the ones who are obviously not Christians. The issues that face our day, that we want them removed at best, or we want to remove ourselves from their presence, but we can't forget about the enemy. And I think of how that can relate to right now in this season with this covid-19 virus that is taking over the world. We can get so mad about all the things that we're missing out on, which is hard. Schools being cancelled, sports being shut down, really important events not happening. We can talk about so many things that we forget that there's a virus. We can get mad at our local officials, our school administrators, even our local Chick-Fil-A that's not open yet, but we forget about the virus. Similarly, the enemy is the cause of the weeds, the enemy is the cause of the brokenness in this world. And I think if we're honest with ourselves, we know why

there's evil, we know why there's brokenness. We can understand that there's an enemy. We just don't understand why God hasn't dealt with it already. Like, "Hello, God, are You watching all this happen? Are You watching all this brokenness? Aren't You going to do something?" Those are the things that we can think and ask God. But Jesus makes it clear in this parable, the wheat and the weeds are too connected, if He deals with the weeds right now, the wheat may come, too. JP has beautifully illustrated this point before. He has said, "We all want God to destroy the evil in this world, but if He did, where should He start? Should He start with your sin, or should He start with mine?" Jesus is making it clear, in this world, there are going to be both wheat and weeds, good people and bad people, the Kingdom of God coming and the presence of sin, both those things are going to be here. But God will absolutely deal with the enemy and with the evil in this world, which leads me to my second point: we have a judge. We have a judge, and He will bring a judgement. And I don't want to breeze past this point too quickly. Jesus makes it clear that at the end, Jesus is going to judge all things. There are those that are going to be with God forever and those that aren't. Every single person and every single action will be judged to be wheat or weeds. However, the good news of the gospel is that God desires that none should perish. If you are watching this today and you are unsure of where you are in your relationship with God, I want to tell you one thing: you have a God who loves you and cares about you. And He sent His Son, and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is all you need to know to know about how much God cares about you. He wants to be in relationship with you forever. This is the gospel. Repent, and find life and life abundant. It is good news. You will no longer belong to a kingdom that is broken and perishing but you will belong to a kingdom that lasts forever. What a gift that is. And Jesus, along with that in this parable, is making it clear who is going to be that judge and who is not. God is the judge, and we aren't. Back to our house, a frequent conversation in our home is, "Who's in charge? Who's the adult and who's the kid?" Because what's happened in the time that our kids have been in our home, they've learned our rules, which is a really beautiful thing. They've learned what gets rewarded and what brings consequences. Just yesterday, I was reminded by our amazing five-year-old that we do not eat food on the couch. Thank you for reminding me of that. They especially love to enforce these rules on each other, though. When one of their siblings breaks a rule, we hear cries for justice. But when they break a rule and when we enforce it on them, we hear, "That's not fair!" However, that's not their role. They're the kid, we're the parent. We make the rules, and we enforce them. And it's funny to think about kids, but let me be very clear, the ways that I do that in my life are much worse than how kids do it. Here's a few examples, some of these may hit home with you. If they don't, you're a better person than myself. So, I'm cruising along in the left lane, for those of you that are in Waco, I'm cruising along 84, on the way out to church. And the person in front of me in the left lane has the audacity to drive only 62 miles per hour, when I'm comfortable driving 64. So, I pass them in the right lane, which is what I'm not supposed to do, and I don't just want to pass them, I want to see who this evil perpetrator of injustice is. So, I stare out the window as I go by. Judgment. Or I watch a child throw a tantrum in a store, and I think, "If only the parent was consistent in their discipline, this would not

be happening.” Judgment. Or I see a clip of someone doing one thing or saying one thing on social media, and I judge their entire person based on that clip. Judgment. I, we, put ourselves in the role of judge and try to decide which camp that people are in. We separate people into teams, into who is good and who is bad, and that’s not our role. That’s God’s role. And when we do that, we fall into the same pattern of sin that Adam and Eve did way back in the beginning. C.S. Lewis said this, “The moment you have a self at all, there is a possibility of putting yourself first – wanting to be the centre – wanting to be God, in fact. That was the sin of Satan: and that was the sin he taught the human race.” When we judge others, we’re telling God we want to be Him. Someone on our staff put it this week, this evaluation of others is really just escapism. Evaluation is escapism, what does that mean? We evaluate other people to escape our own issues, to escape our life, to escape our mess, to escape our sin. We want to be weed pickers, but we’re not as good at pulling weeds as we think we are. We judge others because we don’t want to be judged, which is actually the exact opposite of what scripture says. Just real quickly, scholars argue that in the book of Matthew, you should read it through the lens of two times Jesus gave commandments on mountains: back in Matthew 5-7, which is the Sermon on the Mount, and then Matthew 28 which is the Great Commission, when He tells people to teach all nations what I have taught you. So basically, throughout this this entire book, there are themes that point back to what Jesus already said in Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount. So, as we talk about judgment today, it brings to mind the words of Matthew 7: “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ‘Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” There is a judge, it’s just not you and it’s not me, and when we judge, we bring that same judgment upon ourselves. Think about this: what if Christians led the way in this one thing? What if Christians led the way in not rushing to quick judgments of people, how much would your family change? How much would this church change? How much would our area change? How different would we look than the rest of the world? Which leads me to my final point: we have a role. We have a role to play and we must know what our role is. In this story, who are we? Hopefully, we’re the wheat. And what does wheat do? It grows. And when it grows, it does two things. One, it spreads. Very simply, when the good seed is in good soil, like in the Parable of the Soils, it spreads. And in this chapter, right between the parable and the explanation, there’s two quick parables about the Kingdom of God spreading. Jesus is making clear when the Kingdom of God is growing, it spreads. A growing wheat is a wheat that spreads. And the second thing that the wheat does when it grows in this parable is it looks different than the weeds. The servants didn’t realize they were looking at two plants until the wheat had sprouted its heads and started to look different. So like I said earlier, I’m a dad now, so I’m obligated this morning to talk to you about my lawn. But when I say lawn, don’t think green grass. I mean, there is some grass in there, but at least 40% of my lawn is

weeds, my wife would probably say 70%. And I don't actually know what all of those weeds are, I just know that my grass doesn't look like the picture of the grass from Home Depot. Which is a bummer, it's a bummer that there's weeds coming up, but what's great is when I am really on my game of mowing, you can't tell the difference. The weeds are green, the grass is green, if I mow it, it all looks the same. But if it's been really rainy or I've gotten really busy—like I said, I have four kids—it starts to look different. The weeds start getting taller, the grass is growing, and it looks very different. When we grow, we are going to look different. That's true of the wheat in this parable, and it needs to be true of us as Christians in this world. But looking different is pretty vague; what does that mean? Jesus gives us two great examples on how to look different back in the Sermon on the Mount. First, Matthew 5:3 says this: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Poor in spirit" means humility. One way those who belong to the Kingdom of God look different is by their humility. And then, Matthew 5:10, Jesus says this: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The second way those who belong to the Kingdom of God look different is because they are persecuted or are known by their righteousness. That word, "righteousness," is the Greek word *dikaïos*, and it actually is used to describe both a private pursuit of holiness, your inward righteousness, and a public pursuit of justice, your outward righteousness. We show we belong to the Kingdom of God when we are humble and when we are righteous. This marks us different from the world. How relevant is that for this cultural moment right now? Because I get it, as some of you, when you're hearing me talk about not judging, you're thinking, "Oh, so I can't talk about issues of today? I can't talk about racism?" Or, "I can't talk about abortion?" I'm not saying that. I'm just saying as you do those things, it has to look different. "Oh, you're saying I can't talk about caring for immigrants? Or you're saying I can't talk about religious liberty?" I'm not saying that. I'm saying as you do those things, it has to look different. And you can fill in whatever issue you are passionate about. I'm sure it is a God issue, I'm sure it is a biblical issue, and I know that it matters. But it also matters how you engage, and it matters how I engage. To be specific, for a couple things that I'm really passionate about, in order for me to fight racism, I need to make sure I'm asking God, all the time, to eradicate any prejudice that is inside of me, so I can love my enemies better, like Jesus says in Matthew 5:44. Or in order for me to be truly pro-life, I need to ask God to make sure that in everything I say, I'm not murdering people with my words, like Jesus makes clear in Matthew 5:22. We need to engage humbly and with righteousness, a private pursuit of holiness that leads us to seek justice. Everyone, it's an election year—like we needed something else to get all fired up about in 2020. I promise that if we can do those two things, if we can keep that in the forefront of our mind, that we will be different from the world around us. Our role is to grow. When we grow, we spread, and we look different through our humility and our pursuit of righteousness. In close, we must know the enemy, know the judge, and know our role. And it's fun now for me to make dad jokes, because we have kids. It's been fun looking at the parent memes during this quarantine season, because in so many ways, our family is just like any other family. But there's one thing that's very different about our family: we have no idea how long

these kids will be with us. And even though we are with them all the time, we're with them in the highs and the lows, we're with them in good times and bad times, as they're processing through things, as they're growing, we don't get to decide ultimately what happens to them. And they have lots of other people that really care about them. They have lawyers, they have case workers, they have doctors. And these kids also have biological families that love and care about them. The prayer from the Christian in foster care should be that every child is raised in a healthy and safe way by their biological family, that's our prayer for these kids. But ultimately there's only one person who decides the long-term future of our kids. That's the judge. He or she makes the call. For Kellie and I, there's two things we can do, knowing that. One, we can talk about what the judge should do, all the time. We can go over all the facts, we can talk about all the people in the situation. And we can become paralyzed in that. We can just talk and talk and talk, and ultimately it won't do anything and may even hurt us and hurt the kids. Or two, we can play our role. We could live faithfully with every single moment that these kids are in our home. We can parent faithfully with the time we have, working to instill Kingdom principles in our kids and showing them the love of God in their life. The beautiful thing is that we have incredible judges here in our area, so it makes it much easier to choose option two. And can I tell you something? We have an incredible judge over this world. He has never made a wrong decision, He has never judged unfairly, He has never not taken all the facts into play when He has rendered His judgment. And beyond just a judge, He is a good Father and a wise King. We can trust Him and commit our life to Him. So, we don't have to try to play the role of judge. We can rest easy and live faithfully every single day. We can play our role, which is making sure that we are growing in humility and spreading the Kingdom of God through our pursuit of righteousness. I want this to be true in my life and I want this to be true in yours. Let me pray that it will be. God, thank You for these people, God, thank You for this morning. God, thank You for the grace that You have given me in my life. God, thank You that You see all things, that You see this world, that You are not absent, that You are a good judge. God, I pray for anyone right now who's watching, who may be thinking that something that they've done in their life has disqualified them from relationship with You. I pray that they know that that is a lie. God, that Your grace is sufficient, God, that You want a relationship with them, and You are a good God. We love You, You are awesome. Amen.