

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 | The Parable For Nonbelievers
Sunday April 7, 2024

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 13.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Notes in the foyer—take home with you.

REVIEW:

We are back in Matthew's Gospel today.

After a two-week hiatus of celebrating *Palm Sunday* and *Resurrection Sunday*, we now continue our verse-by-verse exposition of the parables.

As a review, Jesus first taught the *Parable of the Soils* beginning in Matthew 13.

In that parable, we learned *Three Ways to Spiritual Disaster* and *Three Ways to Spiritual Abundance*.

w/ THAT parable

We also learned our primary task as the Church—and that is to sow the Gospel seed to everyone, everywhere.

Next, in verses 10-17, we learned the purpose of parables and how, by using parables, Jesus fulfilled Scripture that was prophesied by Isaiah 500-700 years earlier.

Lastly, we learned why so few people understand parables.

If you missed any of those sermons—they are on the website/app.

INTRODUCTION:

However, these aren't just parables in Matthew 13.

These are special parables. They are unique.

The reason these parables are distinct and noteworthy is that Jesus is telling us what Heaven is like through them.

Jesus mentions the Kingdom of Heaven twelve times in Matthew 13.

Today, Jesus teaches and then explains *The Parable of the Weeds*.

So how does a fictional story about a subject matter that you don't care about, impact your life today?

Let's find out! *Because this parable reveals eternal consequences.*

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:24— He presented another parable to them: "The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

Matthew 13:25— But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and left.

Matthew 13:26— When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared.

Matthew 13:27— The landowner's servants came to him and said, 'Master, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?'

Matthew 13:28— "'An enemy did this,' he told them.
'So, do you want us to go and pull them up?' the servants asked him.

Matthew 13:29— " 'No,' he said. 'When you pull up the weeds, you might also uproot the wheat with them.'

Matthew 13:30— *Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I'll tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles to burn them, but collect the wheat in my barn.'* "

These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 13:24— He presented another parable to them:

KEYPOINT 1:

Parable: a simple story that illustrates a profound spiritual truth.

A parable points beyond itself to something greater (Jerome road signs).

Matthew 13:24— 'The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.'

Jesus, as the Master Teacher, uses another agricultural metaphor.

Please know that most people in the first century Israel were farmers of some sort.

If they didn't farm, they didn't eat.

So, for us to connect with this parables today, it is like strike one.

Most of us are not farmers—let alone set foot on an actual field.

Let me encourage you to press through the metaphor because we will soon discover this parable is not about farming.

Here's what the parable is about.

Matthew 13:24— "The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

From the very beginning, Jesus preached about this Kingdom of Heaven.

When Jesus officially launched His teaching ministry.

Matthew 4:17— "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near."

The Kingdom of Heaven was also a recurring theme in Jesus' most famous sermon — *The Sermon on the Mount*.

Matthew 5:3— "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:10—Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:20—For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.

At the end of the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus ^{closes} begins closing with one of the most terrifying verses in the NT.

Matthew 7:21—"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in Heaven.

The last question asked by the disciples before Jesus' ascension back to Heaven—

Acts 1:6—"Lord, are you restoring the Kingdom (of Heaven) to Israel at this time?"

So, as we continue our study of Matthew's Gospel, it's with this parable that the Kingdom of Heaven becomes Jesus' primary focus.

So, what exactly is the Kingdom of Heaven?

The Kingdom of Heaven describes God's rules, regulations, governmental policies, and administration over His creation as the King of kings.

Here we have strike two today.

Not only are most of us not farmers—but we live in a Republic.

We don't have a king to submit to—(or do we as Christians?)

Keep in mind, God is not running for God!

Regardless, the theme of the Kingdom of Heaven can be traced back almost to the beginning of the Old Testament.

God's Kingdom first appears ^{officially} in Genesis 14, where we find Abraham making an offering to a man named Melchizedek—and continues from there.

So what is the Kingdom of Heaven/Kingdom of God?

On the most basic level, the Kingdom of Heaven is present wherever King Jesus rules and reigns.

Every kingdom needs a king and according to Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven has already come.

Luke 11:20— *If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.*

In other words, Jesus is asking them, “*Who else but God can do what I’m doing?*”

So, the Kingdom of God was alive and well on the Earth while Jesus was physically here.

However, Jesus isn't physically here right now!

But He is spiritually. That's why we celebrated Resurrection Sunday last weekend.

Today—right now— Jesus is physically ruling and reigning from Heaven.

However, He didn't abandon us and leave us as orphans.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to lead us, guide us and direct us.

In other words, God's Kingdom lives in the hearts of those who believe in the Gospel, *today*.

Think about this—Believers have dual citizenship.

Yes, we are citizens of the country we were physically born into—but more importantly, the apostle Paul says...

Philippians 3:20—Our citizenship is in Heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus told Pontius Pilate while on trial for crimes He didn't commit...

John 18:36—"My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. "If my Kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my Kingdom is not from here."

John 18:37— "You are a king then?" Pilate asked. "You say that I'm a king," Jesus replied. "I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth."

So, while the Kingdom of Heaven has not fully arrived yet—the Kingdom is currently a spiritual reality.

But one day very soon, after the rapture of the Church described in 1 Thess 4:17, Jesus will return in blazing glory to establish his literal one thousand-year reign from Jerusalem.

Revelation 20 speaks of this period as the "millennium."

Then and only then will the Kingdom of Heaven be a political reality where all the wrongs of this life will be made right by King Jesus.

So all that was a long preachy answer to define the Kingdom of Heaven:

KEYPOINT 2:

The Kingdom of Heaven is God's rule and administration through the Lord Jesus Christ both now and forever.

So what's really fun about these parables is that we don't have to guess what Heaven is like.

Jesus explains Heaven (and Hell) through parables.

Matthew 13:24— "The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field."

So this should sound familiar—similar to *The Parable of the Soils*.

Matthew 13:25— "But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and left."

Now, in the parable of the soils, Jesus emphasized what happened to the good seed.

Today, is the opposite—Jesus focuses on the bad seed.

In Jesus' day, people sought revenge against their enemies by sowing weeds among the wheat.

So, enemies would strike out in anger and vengeance by throwing bad seeds in the middle of good seeds.

In addition, they would sometimes dump salt on fields to get even.

Both ways disrupted the harvest—which meant disrupting the farmer's livelihood.

It's like cybercrime today, where someone sends you an email that contains a virus, disrupting your day or, even worse, your livelihood.

These actions by people are mean, cruel, cowardly, and sadistic.

Think about it—^{In this Parable} this coward waited until everybody was fast asleep to cast weeds ^{into} ~~or dump salt on~~ another man's fields.

Today, we have the same thing with cybercrime: these cowards hide behind layers of code and firewalls so they won't get caught, either.

Matthew 13:26— When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared.

Your translation may say *tares* instead of weeds.

The Greek noun is *zizanion*.

In English, it's a "bearded darnel."

It's poisonous—therefore it's dangerous to both animals and humans.

Regardless of whether your translation says *weeds* or *tares*, the picture here is that this weed looks so closely like wheat—that it's almost impossible to tell them apart until the wheat ripens and bears its grain.

In other words, these weeds bear no fruit.

They only take up space and cause havoc for the farmer.

KEYPOINT 3

Weeds always take and give nothing back—weeds never produce good fruit.

Matthew 13:26— When the wheat plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared.

It was not until many weeks later that the servants realized what had happened.

Obviously, it's not uncommon for a few weeds to grow in fields.

However, the picture here is that the weeds took over and infested the field.

The ratio of weeds to wheat must have been substantial—otherwise, these servants wouldn't have been so surprised.

Matthew 13:27— The landowner's servants came to him and said, 'Master, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?'

The servants were concerned, fearing that the weeds would ruin the harvest.

Matthew 13:28— "'An enemy did this,' he told them.

The farmer's answer is definite.

The owner's mind is not filled with any doubt whatsoever about what happened.

This was a crime—a deliberate act of an enemy.

Matthew 13:28— *So, do you want us to go and pull them up?' the servants asked him.*

Matthew 13:29— *"'No,' he said. 'When you pull up the weeds, you might also uproot the wheat with them.*

It seems that the farmer has been through this before—or knows someone who has.

Notice how the farmer made no attempt to resolve the problem at this time.

He knew the plant's roots would have intertwined with the weeds.

What's the solution?

Matthew 13:30— *Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I'll tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles to burn them, but collect the wheat in my barn.'*

This farmer is wise. He is also patient and strategic.

KEYPOINT 4:
Only at harvest time could the wheat and the weeds be separated.

Now, in verse 36, the disciples ask Jesus to explain the parable.

Matthew 13:36— *Then he left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."*

It's interesting that the disciples called this parable "The parable of the weeds."

As we'll discover from Jesus, they could have said, "The parable of the unbelievers."

Matthew 13:37— He replied, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;"

Jesus has many titles throughout Scripture—over 150 total.

However, *The Son of Man* is Jesus' favorite title because it focuses on His humility and humanity in the incarnation.

So what's Jesus saying using that title? That He Himself is the sower in this parable.

Jesus continues...

Matthew 13:38(a)— *the field is the world;*

Make a note—the field is the *world*—It is not only the Church.

Now, the Church is in the world, but what Jesus refers to is the universal/invisible Church in the world.

In other words, when God gives you the faith to believe in the Gospel, you are born-again and a child of God—a member of the universal church.

Matthew 13:38(b)— *and the good seed—these are the children of the Kingdom.*

In other words, the Lord plants His children where He wants them so they can be witnesses for the Gospel.

Example:

The Kingdom of this world sees you as a banker, mechanic, physician, plumber, chef, or small business owner—whatever your profession is—it doesn't matter.

But—the truth is that *within* the Kingdom of Heaven—you're now a missionary for the Gospel, sowing seeds within your area of expertise.

Have you ever seen the TV show called "Undercover Boss?"

Believers ^{are} living in the kingdom of this world—yet working in the Kingdom of Heaven.

As Christians we go to work, and we work hard, get paid—but the work is not the end in itself.

The work provides us ample opportunity to plant and water Gospel centered seeds.

So, God's Kingdom includes the Church, yes—but also business, government, schools, and families.

KEYPOINT 5:

As a child of God, you are an undercover missionary disguised by your profession!

How cool is that!

BTW, if you're retired, retirement is your profession.

Retirement doesn't mean you check out of the world—it means you now have more time to work in God's Kingdom—getting ready to finish your life well.

Matthew 13:38(b)— and the good seed—these are the children of the Kingdom.

So Jesus scatters Believers throughout the world.

In one sense, we take his truth with us wherever we go.

People don't die at old age - they die of retirement - As Christians we should hate the idea of Retirement

In another sense, we are His truth; we are His mouth, and we are His hands and feet as we sow the Gospel seed and share Jesus day by day.

KEYPOINT 6:

Christians are placed and planted on divine assignment ~~from the Lord Jesus Christ.~~

Psalm 1:3—He (righteous people) is like a tree planted (not an accident) beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

So that's the good seed... *Good News - here's the bad.*

Matthew 13:38(c)— The weeds are the children of the evil one,

Matthew 13:39— and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.

Jesus changes gears now—many people (including professing Christians) don't believe in the devil.

The problem with their theology is that Jesus sure does.

Luke 10:18—He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from Heaven like lightning.

Let it be known that Jesus reveals that Satan is a real being.

Another example includes Jesus talking to Scribes and Pharisees...

John 8:44—You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

Yes, the devil is real—and he is not some dude in a red suit with a pitchfork.

He hates Christ which means he hates all Christians—and his job is to steal, kill and destroy.

+ **Matthew 13:38(c)**— *The weeds are the children of the evil one,*

+ **Matthew 13:39**— *and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.*

+ **KEYPOINT 7:**

The devil also places counterfeit Christians among true Believers to hinder God's work in God's Kingdom.

There are counterfeit Christians in every church—but also where we work, in the schools, in the government and even in our families.

Throughout history, the weeds (unbelievers) have always outnumbered the wheat (Believers).

We must beware of Satan's counterfeits.

Satan has counterfeit Christians (2 Cor. 11:26) who believe a counterfeit Gospel (Gal. 1:6–9).

Satan encourages a counterfeit righteousness (Rom. 10:1–3), and even has a counterfeit church (Rev. 2:9).

Eventually, some day very soon, Satan will produce a counterfeit Christ (2 Thes. 2:1–12).

Religious history is filled with accounts of non-believers and even pagans infiltrating the Kingdom of God.

In fact, one of Satan's most effective strategies is to wreak havoc on the Church through "religion."

Make a note—there are countless pagans preaching from countless pulpits every Sunday.

KEYPOINT 8:

God allows weeds (unbelievers) and wheat (Believers) to live side by side in this world.

But it doesn't last long.

Matthew 13:39(b)— *The harvest is the end of the age,*

The harvest represents God's final judgment.

The end of the age is the end of the world—by the way, it's not like all those crazy movies.

KEYPOINT 9:

The end of the world is an end to this present world order.

This is where the Lord Jesus ushers in a time of accountability and judgment for how we lived our lives.

Just as the human reapers in the parable separated the weeds from the wheat, God will separate true Believers from unbelievers.

Matthew 13:39(c)— *and the harvesters are angels.*

Just as some people don't believe in Satan, other people don't believe in angels.

Once again, Jesus does. He mentions them here.

The Gospels mention angels over 50 times.

If we fast forward a few chapters in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells us precisely what He will do at the end of the age with His angels.

Matthew 25:31—When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels, with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. (Jerusalem)

Matthew 25:32— All the nations, will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Matthew 25:33— He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on the left.

Matthew 25:34— Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

What a gracious God we have! He tells us what will happen before it happens so there are no surprises.

When we stand face to face before the Lord Jesus Christ, we can't say that we didn't know.

Matthew 13:40— Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

Just as some folks don't believe in Satan or angels, others don't believe in judgment.

However, as the farmer burns the weeds, God will gather Unbelievers and burn them.

Just as water was God's judgment on sinners in the days of Noah, fire is judgment on sinners at the end of the age.

Matthew 13:41— The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather from his Kingdom all who cause sin and those guilty of lawlessness.,
 Whose Kingdom? — there is not a square inch of the cosmos that is not under
 We live in a society were many people think they can do anything they want—and
 the laws of the land don't apply to them.

The Authority of the Lord Jesus Christ

Have you ever watched videos on YouTube to where police officers are dealing with people who claim they live in a sovereign nation?!

Meaning that the laws don't apply to them.

It never ends well for them—how much more will it not end well when standing before a Sovereign God and Judge.

Matthew 13:42(a)— They will throw them into the blazing furnace...

This blazing furnace is unquenchable (Mark 9:44) and eternal (Matt. 25:41).

Matthew 13:42(b)— where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Those who weep in Hell are those who only act like Christians, thinking that their good deeds would save them.

Keep in mind that good people don't go to Heaven — only forgiven sinners do.

Those who gnash their teeth are people who have always hated God.

~~Hell is not a place where~~ many people joke or think that they will be able to continue in their depravity and sin apart from God's presence. *in hell*.

God is very present in Hell—in the form of wrath and judgment.

Scripture tells us ^{that} Hell is a place of endless torment.

There will be no friendships, no fellowship, no camaraderie, no comfort and certainly no party.

Even the demons don't want to go to Hell.

Jesus was talking to a man who was possessed by 6,000 demons. (Legion/title).

Matthew 8:29—Suddenly they shouted, "What do you have to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

Those demons begged Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs.

Matthew 13:43— Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Let anyone who has ears listen.

If you're a believer this morning - This is not your best life now.

The best is yet to come.

~~PREACH~~

PREACH:

This parable is called the *Parable of the Wheat and/or Weeds*.

But as we've found out, it has nothing to do with farming—and everything to do with God's holy and righteous judgment on sin.

By God's grace, Jesus tells us exactly what happens in those last days.

Jesus hides nothing from us.

So what's this mean for you? It depends where you are.

Are you a true Believer? How do you know? *Scripture tells us:*

- You know by the good fruit in your life.
- You know because you're not the same person you used to be.
- You know because you now hate your sin and love righteousness. *God, God's work, God's people*
- You know because you've picked up your cross and follow Jesus.
- You know because no one and nothing else matters—but your relationship with Jesus.
- You know because you're now serving, giving, tithing to the local church.
- You know because you're a part of something so much bigger than yourself.
- You know because you're more loving and patient with people.
- You know because you have more joy and peace—regardless of your current circumstances.
- You know because you are more kind and gentle.
- You know because you have learned and continue to learn the discipline of self control.

In other words, if you haven't been changed by God's grace, you haven't received it—and you're not forgiven because you're only acting the part.

Secondly, if you're a Believer, you are to be aware of the work of the devil.

You are to be conscious and have discernment that not everyone who says they are a Christian—actually is.

Thirdly, you are to know that your divine commission from God is to share Jesus day-by-day with those around you.

Now, if you're an unbeliever this morning—this parable makes no sense to you at all.

However, if God is tugging on your heart—to believe in the Gospel—don't harden your heart, but *confess* that Jesus is Lord and *believe* that He was resurrected from the dead.

And if that's you this morning—this parable is for you.

And as the Lord Jesus says—“*Let anyone who has ears, listen.*”

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

2 Peter 3:18 - (May you) grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

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