

Red Chairables

The Wheat and the Weeds

Part 7 – September 12, 2010

[VIDEO: WHEAT FIELD]

Every farmer understands the frustration of weeds. Even if you only tend a small garden or a flower bed, you'll spend a lot of time spraying 'em, pulling 'em, and cursing 'em. And does it surprise you when they come right back? Not so much. Did you know that God has His own gardening problems? In the parable of The Wheat and the Weeds, Jesus tells us that we shouldn't be surprised when evil pops up around us.

Jesus told them another parable: "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. 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 root up 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.'" - *Matthew 13:24-30 NIV*

Jesus used everyday analogies to demonstrate what the Kingdom of God is like. Among other things, He said that it's like: a mustard seed, a fine pearl, yeast, and a fishing net.



And with each of these disarmingly common comparisons, Jesus was radically redefining what it meant to part of God's kingdom.

His fellow Jews believed that the Messiah would establish physical kingdom, and destroy or enslave all non-Jews. But, Jesus' kingdom was going to exist in the heart of *anyone* who received Jesus as Savior and made Him their Lord.

And because of this strong, long-held belief, Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds was perplexing even to His own disciples. In their world, the Jews were wheat and gentiles were weeds.

They were still confused when He appeared after His resurrection:

... they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" - *Acts 1:6b NLT*

So, when Jesus takes a break from teaching, they take the opportunity to question Him about this perplexing parable that deals with God's seeming reluctance to rid the world of evil.



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

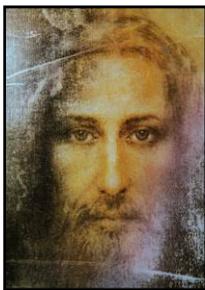
And what follows is Jesus' point by point explanation. He had begun the parable by saying:

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. - *Matthew 13:24 NIV*

And so, this is the first thing He now explains:

He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man." - *Matthew 13:37 NIV*

This is Jesus' favorite title for Himself: "Son of Man". Do you have any idea what it means or where it comes from? The Prophet Daniel had a vision about the coming Messiah; and in this vision, when God came to earth He looked like ... a man.



... I looked, and there before me was one like a **son of man**, [*He had the characteristics of a human*] ... He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; **all peoples, nations** and **men of every language** worshiped him. [*That's every Jew AND gentile!*] His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. - *Daniel 7:13-14 NIV*

And so, Jesus, the Son of Man, is the One who sows the good seed.

And then He says that:

The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. - *Matthew 13:38a NIV*

As the Son of Man, Jesus took on the characteristics of mankind. Now He refers to the good seed as the: "sons of the kingdom" because they take on the characteristics of His realm. Each wheat stalk represents one who has submitted to His reign.

Then, in the parable, it says:

But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. - *Matthew 13:25 NIV*

Jesus doesn't give a hidden meaning to "sleeping". So, we're safe to assume it means that to a large degree, we're unable to perceive the schemes of the enemy, and his bad-seed planting. But, Jesus does explain that ...

The weeds are the sons of the evil one ... - *Matthew 13:38b NIV*

"Sons of the evil one" are those who reflect *his* characteristics. Each weed represents one who refuses to submit to His reign.

You hear people say, "We're *all* God's children". And that's true in one sense but untrue in another. We're all God's children in the sense of creation. But, we're *not* all God's children by way of redemption. But, this parable makes it abundantly clear that we shouldn't try to judge the wheat from the weeds *until* the harvest.

We can't know all the ways God's Spirit is working in hearts and minds, or what the future holds. So, this side of Heaven, it's impossible to separate the *authentic* wheat from *genuine* weeds. So, we should do the praying and let God do the sorting.



Dandelion a.k.a. Cockle

Jesus audience was well aware of the weeds He was referencing. It's called dandelion, also known as *false* wheat or *perverted* wheat. And it's quite poisonous! In Jesus' day, it was sown as a tactic in warfare, and it was also a very dirty trick for revenge. It was actually forbidden by Roman law. You could be tried for sowing dandelion in a wheat field.

Now, this gets pretty exciting; because, look what Jesus says:

When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. - *Matthew 13:26 NIV*



This doesn't mean that the weeds suddenly grew up among the wheat really fast. It means that they could see the difference. Do you know how they could spot the dandelion once it developed? Heads of wheat droop, but heads to dandelion remain upright. False Wheat won't bow its head! It's the same for the *sons of the evil one*. They will die without bowing in surrender or submission to the rule and reign of Jesus.

Jesus was an absolute master at weaving everyday objects into kingdom analogies. And it seems like the deeper you dig into His correlations the more you can draw out about His kingdom. I mean, the indistinguishable plants: one poisonous and one wholesome, the bowing heads, it's so ... *perfect* ... maybe a little *too* perfect.

As He created the earth, He knew the message He'd ultimately have to convey. Now follow me on this: turns out ... He's *God!* When He designed this planet, He could've built into the system hidden analogies (that we think of as natural occurrences), but are just waiting to be used as intricate kingdom analogies!

I don't think Jesus composed His parables around everyday life. I think He composed everyday life around His parables! And it speaks of His sovereignty and love and grace, that even as He was creating this world, He knew He was coming for you!

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. - *Matthew 13:27-28a NIV*

Jesus makes it very clear that there's an enemy in the garden.



And the enemy who sows them is the devil. - *Matthew 13:39a NIV*

He is a cunning and sneaky enemy who specializes in making bad appear good, wrong appear right, the poisonous pleasant, and the harmful healthy. He's out to rob God's glory and your of purpose.

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 root up the wheat with them. (*Mat 13:28b-29*)

How many of you would say that at some point in your life you were more like the weeds than the wheat? Aren't you glad God waited?

We should offer that same courtesy to all the people around us who look so much like weeds that you just want to yank 'em out!

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. - *2 Peter 3:9 NIV*

We live in a fallen, broken world. But, it hasn't "gone to the devil". The wheat and the weeds are alive at God's command! But, the appointed day will come. And the season of mercy and grace will be followed by a season of judgment and justice.



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. - *Matthew 13:39b-41 NIV*

The Lord and I have something in common: we don't like to weed!

He waits until the last possible moment. So do I! He sends out His angels to do the weeding. That's what I do! (I just have the one angel, though ... Shar). He's filled with compassion, not wanting any to perish. And I'm *lazy!*

But, other than that, we're so alike!

They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. - *Matthew 13:42 NIV*

This signifies both emotional as well as physical anguish for those who choose to emulate the character of the evil one.

So, how do we know for sure if we're "sons of the kingdom"? One question: Do you surrender and submit to Jesus as Lord? It's a process. *And*, it's an attitude that recognizes that we're helpless to save ourselves and wholly dependent upon Christ.

That's what separates a true believer from a make-believer.

I look longingly to the day when my life and this world will all be part of God's weed-free kingdom. As Jesus finishes His explanation he says:



Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. - *Matthew 13:43 NIV*

There's one more *big* difference between wheat and darnel: after it dies, wheat becomes golden, but false wheat turns black.

If we reflect His character here, we'll radiate it there!