

July 23, 2023



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Even before a sin takes root, God can alert us to the danger

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Loving God, when You show me my personal sin, point me to Your plan to pull those weeds

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties

(Ps 139:23 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Mar 31, 2021)

Series: The Righteous Reign of God

UNIT 2: Jesus Envisions the Kingdom

NEXT WEEK

Finding and Gathering
(Matt 13:44-52)

Weeds Among the Wheat Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Lesson Background and Introduction

The phrase “kingdom of heaven” occurs 32 times in the Gospel of Matthew. This is equivalent to the phrase “kingdom of God” as used dozens of times in the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John but rarely in Matthew (see Matthew 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43). The kingdom of Heaven/kingdom of God is not defined by territory or government apparatus. It does not levy taxes or conscript people for military service. This kingdom is where God reigns as king; it is the dominion of his authority. There is no limit to this potential, for, as the psalmist taught, “The LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth” (Psalm 47:2; compare 83:18; 97:9). The psalmist affirms the nature of God with the repeated acknowledgment that “the LORD reigns” (93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1). Both John the Baptist and Jesus called people to repentance and preparation for the coming of this kingdom; they warned that it was “near” (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). Later, Jesus stated that his ministry of casting out demons signaled that the kingdom had come into the midst of humanity (12:28; see lesson 6). The arrival of the kingdom was something for which Jesus and his disciples had prayed (6:10). Jesus’ disciples often heard him speak about the kingdom of Heaven/kingdom of God, and they were astonished and confused by his descriptions of its nature (example: Matthew 19:23-25). Much of their reaction can be traced to the fact that Jesus’ kingdom parables were metaphorical (figurative) in nature regarding aspects of the kingdom. Characteristically, these kingdom parables begin, “The kingdom of heaven is like ...”; the majority of those are found in Matthew 13. Today’s lesson text of the parable of the weeds among the wheat is the first time Jesus uses this introductory phrase in the Gospel of Matthew.

The parable of the weeds among the wheat explains one of the greatest mysteries of the kingdom: why God allows the wicked to prosper alongside his holy people. The parable teaches us that God is aware of wickedness but he chooses to leave such wickedness unjudged for the time being. God is neither oblivious to wickedness nor does his allowing the wicked to continue indicate his tacit approval. To followers of God who are mixed among those who reject God, the point of the parable of the weeds among the wheat must not be lost: the presence of the wicked among us is temporary. We, like the prophet Habakkuk, wonder at the silence of the Lord when “the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?” (Habakkuk 1:13). Even so, Jesus taught in this parable that God is not oblivious to these injustices. But we should not be in more of a hurry for the wicked to be punished than he is (2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 6:10). We should remember that if God took immediate vengeance on a person with every sin committed, we, the children of the kingdom, would be punished on a daily basis. God’s timing is just that: a plan that he determines and controls in ways beyond our understanding. The “harvest” of the wicked and the righteous will come in God’s good time. We must hope and pray for final, ultimate justice. We must be diligent that we and all whom we love are harvested as wheat, not weeds.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Good Seeds with the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30)

Sowing of good seeds of God's Word (24)

Good seed of God's word that keeps one from sin (Ps 119:11)

Good seed of God's word that allows one to stand when troubles come (Luke 6:47-48)

Good seed of God's word that allows one to be successful (Joshua 1:8)

Good seed of God's word that allows one to use God's word correctly (2 Tim 2:15)

Good seed of God's word that allows one to distinguish good from evil (Heb 5:14)

Sowing of weeds of lies and deception (25)

Lies that are influenced by Satan (John 8:44)

Lies that are attempts of the unrighteous (Exodus 23:1)

Deception through lies (Ps 5:6)

Deception through evilness (1 Peter 3:10-12)

Wheat and weeds together (26-28)

Together but with all kinds of people (Matt 13:47)

Together but with divisions (Rom 16:17)

Together but with those who have corrupt character (1 Cor 15:33)

Together but with those who slander (James 4:11)

Separation will occur at the judgment (29-30)

Judgment for stubbornness and unrepentant hearts (Rom 2:5)

Judgment because all must appear before the judgment seat of God (2 Cor 5:10)

Judgment because it is destined for man to face judgment (Heb 9:27)

Judgment because God knows how punish the ungodly (2 Peter 2:9)

Explanation of the Parable (Matt 13:36-43)

Sower of the good seeds is Jesus (36-37)

Jesus sows through His Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13)

Jesus sows through revelation (Gal 1:12)

Jesus sows about love (1 Thess 4:9)

Jesus sows the truth (Eph 4:20-21)

Field is the world (38)

World that thinks the things of God are foolishness (1 Cor 2:14)

World that seeks answers through human ideas (Acts 17:16-21)

World that uses human wisdom (1 Cor 1:16-21)

World that is being veiled by Satan (2 Cor 4:3-4)

Sower of the weeds is the devil (39)

Satan sows through evil spiritual forces (Eph 6:12)

Satan sows by looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)

Satan sows because the end is near (1 Peter 4:3-7)

Satan sows because he wants to sift us (Luke 22:31-32)

Judgment of the unsaved (40-42)

Judgment of God's wrath (Ps 21:9)

Judgment that casts unbelievers into a blazing furnace (Dan 3:6)

Judgment that is like a winnowing fork (Matt 3:12)

Judgment that pronounces the separation from God (Matt 25:41)

Saved will be gathered into heaven (43)

Heaven because it is our inheritance (Matt 25:32-34)

Heaven to participate in eternal life (Matt 25:46)

Heaven to be with God in His glory (Col 3:4)

Heaven because God rescued us to be in His heavenly kingdom (2 Tim 4:18)