

Parables of God's Just Kingdom

Matthew 13:24-33
SS Lesson for 06/10/2018

Devotional Scripture: Ezekiel 17:22-24

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

Key Verse: Matt 13:30

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES (MATT 13:24-30)

Seed sown by God (24-25)

Good seed are sown by God through Jesus (Matt 13:37)

Good seed stand for the sons of the kingdom (Matt 13:38)

Good seed are imperishable (1 Peter 1:23)

Good seed remain in us and keeps us from continuing to sin (1 John 3:9)

Seed sown by Satan (25-26)

Tare seed are sown by the devil (Matt 13:39)

Tare seed sower was hurled from heaven to earth (Rev 12:9)

Tare seed stand for sons of the evil one (Matt 13:38)

Tare seed secretly slip in among God's people (Jude 1:4)

Temporary coexistence ((27-28)

Temporary coexistence but can be distinguished because they won't serve God (Mal 3:18)

Temporary coexistence because both the good and bad have been called (Matt 22:10-12)

Temporary coexistence but will not be prepared when Jesus returns (Matt 25:6-13)

Temporary coexistence that will not be judged until Jesus returns (1 Cor 4:5)

Eternal separation (29-30)

Eternal separation because of not understanding God (Isa 27:10-11)

Eternal separation because of being arrogant evildoers (Mal 4:1)

Eternal separation because God commands them to depart from Him into the eternal fire (Matt 25:41)

Eternal separation because of not remaining in God (John 15:6)

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (MATT 13:31-32)

Small seed (31)

Small seed that is the smallest planted (Mark 4:30-32)

Small seeds that will grow (Luke 13:18-19)

Small seed that God can make into a mighty nation (Isa 60:22)

Small seeds are sometimes despised (Zech 4:10)

Large tree (32)

Large tree planted by God that will be shelter and shade (Ezek 17:23-24)

Large tree that is abundantly yielding fruit for all to be fed (Dan 4:12)

Large tree that God ensures is well watered (Ps 104:16-18)

Large tree that God will make into a mighty one (Isa 60:22)

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN (MATT 13:33)

Hidden impact (33)

Hidden because of being part of the mystery of God (Col 2:2-3)

Hidden by God until the time was right for revealing it (Eph 3:9)

Hidden with Jesus in God (Col 3:3)

Hidden but will be given to the ones who overcome through the Holy Spirit (Rev 2:17)

Resulting impact (33)

Impact of shining like the full light of day (Prov 4:18)

Impact of being guided into all truth (John 16:12-14)

Impact of God completing His work in us (Phil 1:6)

Impact of being kept blameless until the coming of Jesus (1 Thess 5:23-24)

Impact of gaining abounding love and insight (Phil 1:9)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM ALLEN CARR

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR COMMENTARY

Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson some basic truths about the present development of God's Kingdom through **Parables of God's Just Kingdom**. The **study's aim** is to expect that many people who do not truly know the Lord will profess faith in Him. The **study's application** is to acknowledge our limited understanding of people's hearts and trust the Lord to judge them perfectly.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Matt 13:30

Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The previous chapter (12) is probably the major turning point in the book. The King had authenticated His power by various miracles. But growing opposition to the King climaxed when Israel's leaders concluded that Jesus worked not by divine power but by satanic power (9:34; 12:22-37). While their full rejection of Him did not occur until later, the die was cast. Therefore Jesus turned to His disciples and began to instruct them along different lines. This is one of several major discourses in the Gospel of Matthew (others are in chaps. 5-7; 10; 23-25).

13:1-9 (Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-8). As Jesus continued to minister to **crowds** of people, He did something He had not done before. For the first time in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told **parables**. The word "parable" comes from two Greek words (*para* and *ballō*), which together mean "to throw alongside." A parable, like an illustration, makes a comparison between a known truth and an unknown truth; it throws them alongside each other. In the first of seven parables in this chapter Jesus told about **a farmer** who sowed **seed** in his field. The emphasis in the story is on the results of the sowing, for the seed **fell** on four kinds of soil: **along the path** (Matt. 13:4), **on rocky places** (v. 5), **among thorns** (v. 7), and **on good soil** (v. 8). So the farmer had four kinds of results.

13:10-17 (Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10). The **disciples** immediately noticed a change in Jesus' method of teaching. They **came** and **asked** Him directly **why** He was speaking **in parables**. The Lord gave three reasons. First, He was communicating through parables in order to continue to reveal truth to His disciples (Matt. 13:11-12a). The Lord said He was making known to them **the secrets of the kingdom of heaven**. The word "secrets" is translated "mysteries" in other Bible versions and in most of its other NIV occurrences. This term in the New Testament referred to truths not revealed in the Old Testament but which now were made known to those instructed. Why did Matthew frequently use the term "kingdom of heaven" whereas Mark, Luke, and John used only "kingdom of God" and never "kingdom of heaven"? Some scholars answer that "heaven" was a softened reference to God by Jews who, out of reverence, avoided saying the word "God." However, Matthew did occasionally write "kingdom of God" (12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43). And he used the word "God" almost 50 times. A distinction seems intended: The "kingdom of God" never includes unsaved people, but the "kingdom of heaven" includes both saved people and also others who profess to be Christians but are not. This is seen in the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds (see 13:24-30, 36-43), the Parable of the Mustard Seed (see vv. 31-35), and the Parable of the Net (see vv. 47-52). Significantly Jesus did not speak of any "mysteries" concerning the kingdom of heaven until the nation had made its decision concerning Him. That decision was made by the leaders when they attributed His divine power to Satan (9:34; 12:22-37). Now Jesus unveiled certain additional facts not given in the Old Testament about His reign on earth. Many Old Testament prophets had predicted that the Messiah would deliver the nation Israel and establish His kingdom on the earth. Jesus came and offered the

kingdom (4:17), but the nation rejected Him (12:24). In view of that rejection what would happen to God's kingdom? The "secrets" of the kingdom now reveal that an entire Age would intervene between Israel's rejection of the King and her later acceptance of Him. Second, Jesus spoke in parables to hide the truth from unbelievers. The secrets of the kingdom would be given to the disciples, but would be hidden from the religious leaders who rejected Him (13:11b, **but not to them**). In fact, even what they had previously known would no longer be clear to them (v. 12). Jesus' parabolic instruction thus carried with it a judgmental aspect. By using parables in public, Jesus could preach to as many individuals as before, but He could then draw the disciples aside and explain to them fully the meaning of His words. Third, He spoke in parables in order to fulfill Isaiah 6:9-10. As **Isaiah** began his ministry, God told him that people would not comprehend his message. Jesus experienced the same kind of response. He preached the Word of God and many people saw but they did not truly perceive; they heard but did **not... understand** (Matt. 13:13-15). By contrast, the disciples were **blessed** because they were privileged to **see** (understand) and **hear** these truths (v. 16), truths that people in Old Testament times **longed to** know (v. 17; cf. 1 Peter 1:10-11). Jesus' disciples heard the same truths as the national leaders, but their response was entirely different. The disciples saw and believed; the leaders saw and rejected. Since the leaders turned from the light they had been **given**, God gave them no additional light.

13:24-30. In the second **parable**, Jesus again used the figure of the sower, but with a different twist. After a farmer **sowed** his wheat **seed**, an **enemy came** at night and **sowed weeds** on the same soil. As a result, **the wheat** and **the weeds** grew together and would continue to do so till the time of **harvest**, for removing **the weeds** early would result in destroying the **wheat** (vv. 28-29). Therefore they must **grow together until the harvest** when **the weeds** would **first** be gathered out and destroyed. **Then... the wheat** would be gathered **into the barn**.

13:31-32. Another **parable** Jesus presented to the crowd likened **the kingdom of heaven** to a **mustard seed**. This seed was in fact the smallest of the garden seeds known. (Orchard seeds, though smaller, were unknown in that part of the world.) Also "small as a mustard seed" was a proverb by which people then referred to something unusually small (e.g., "faith as small as a mustard seed," 17:20). Though its seed is so small, a mustard plant grows to a great height (12-15 feet!) in one season, and is a nesting place for **the birds of the air**. Jesus did not directly interpret this parable. However, its meaning may be that the sphere of professing followers, sometimes called Christendom, which Jesus mentioned in the second parable, would have a small beginning but would grow rapidly into a large entity. This group could include both believers and unbelievers, as indicated by the birds lodging in the branches of the tree. Other interpreters feel, however, that the presence of the birds is not an indication of evil but simply an expression of prosperity and bounty.

13:33-35. In this fourth **parable** Jesus compared **the kingdom of heaven** to **yeast** (leaven) which, when **mixed into a large amount of flour**, continues to work till all **the dough** is permeated. Many expositors teach that the yeast here represents evil present in the interval of time between the Advents of the King. In the Bible yeast often represents evil (e.g., Ex. 12:15; Lev. 2:11; 6:17; 10:12; Matt. 16:6,11-12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; Gal. 5:8-9). However, if the yeast in this parable represents evil, the idea would be redundant for evil was already represented by the weeds in the second parable. Therefore some feel that Jesus had in mind here the dynamic character of yeast. The nature of yeast is such that once the process of leavening begins, it is impossible to stop. Perhaps Jesus was implying that those who profess to belong to the kingdom would grow in numbers and nothing would be able to stop their advance. This idea fits with the nature of yeast and makes sense in the flow of these parables. Matthew added (Matt. 13:34-35) that is in keeping with Jesus' earlier statements (cf. vv. 11-12). By speaking **in parables** Jesus was fulfilling Scripture (Ps. 78:2) and at the same time was teaching truths not previously revealed.

13:36-43. As Jesus and **His disciples** came **into a house** away from **the crowd** they asked for an explanation of this "wheat and weeds" **parable**. First, He said, the sower of **the good seed is the Son of Man**, the Lord Himself. This fact is an important starting point for understanding parables. The parables cover the time beginning with the Lord Himself on earth ministering and proclaiming the good news. Second, **the field is the world** into which the good news is spread. Third, **the good seed** represents **the sons of the kingdom**. The good seed in this parable corresponds to the seed in the first parable that produced a fruitful crop. **The weeds are the sons of the evil one** (cf. v. 19) that had been sown among the wheat by **the enemy... the devil**. This condition of the kingdom was never revealed in the Old Testament, which spoke of a kingdom of righteousness in which evil would be overcome. Fourth, **the harvest is the end of the Age, and the harvesters are angels** (cf. v. 49). This fact gives the ending of the time period suggested by these parables. "The end of the Age" represents the conclusion of the present Age before

Christ establishes the messianic kingdom. Thus the parables in Matthew 13 cover the period of time from Christ's work on earth to the time of the judgment at His return. At His second coming, the **angels** will gather the wicked and **throw them into** judgment (vv. 40-42; cf. vv. 49-50; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:15). At that time **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**. Matthew frequently mentioned this reaction to judgment (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), and Luke mentioned it once (Luke 13:28). Each time it is used, it refers to judgment on sinners before the Millennium is established. "Weeping" suggests sorrow and grief (emotional agony of the lost in hell), and grinding of one's teeth speaks of pain (physical agony in hell). These are some of the many references in Matthew to judgment. **Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father** (Matt. 13:43; cf. Dan. 12:3). In this period between Jesus' rejection and His future return He the King is absent but His kingdom continues, though in a newly revealed form. This Age is broader than but includes the Church Age. The church did not begin until the day of Pentecost, and it will conclude at the Rapture, at least seven years before the end of this Age. This "mystery period" is characterized by profession of faith but also by a counter-profession that cannot be separated until the final judgment. This mystery period does not involve a universal triumph of the gospel, as postmillennialists affirm, nor does it include Christ's earthly reign. It simply is the time between His two Advents, before He returns to institute the kingdom promised to David through his greater Son.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

It would be nice to envision the kingdom of God expanding into the world through the ministry of the church, by means of the gospel, in an effortless way, without any obstacles. It would be pleasant if everyone would cooperate with God's people and we could consistently see masses of people being saved and growing in faith. However, the world is not like that. Even the church is less than completely pure. In this section of Matthew's Gospel, the Lord shares three parables and an explanation. All the parables concern aspects of the growth and progress of God's kingdom on earth. The text helps explain why this does not happen smoothly. First, we see that there is an enemy (Matt. 13:25, 39). Jesus explained that this enemy is Satan, and by implication, those who do his bidding in the world. It will be a struggle to grow God's kingdom on earth, and we will run into many "tares," both in and out of the church, who will seek to discourage and destroy the sowing of God's good seed, the gospel. All believers should realize that they are in for a battle. Preaching the gospel and building the kingdom will have many difficulties, obstacles, and troubles because there is an enemy at work. Next, we see that there is a harvest coming. The gospel will go forward side by side with the work of the enemy until the time of God's own choosing. Then the harvest will come, when all the sowing and growing will be finished. Reapers (who are angels) will come, and God's justice will finally be enforced (Matt. 13:41-42). There is nothing the enemy will be able to do about this—the harvest will be enforced by divine power, through the means of God's mighty angels. This is a comforting word for His people. Finally, we see the reckoning that comes. The reapers will first gather up the tares, who are the children of Satan, the ones doing his bidding. These are all the unbelievers who are at work in the world. They are bundled up to burn. Jesus explained that this points to eternal loss and damnation (Matt. 13:42). Then the good wheat will be gathered up and secured into the barn. This refers to the salvation of the righteous, those who have trusted in the Lord (vs. 43). The righteous will manifest the glory of God forever. In His explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares, it is interesting that the Lord Jesus spent more time on the fate of the tares (the wicked) than He did on that of the wheat (the righteous). He was stressing that God's kingdom is a just kingdom. Justice will prevail in the end. We are often tormented by the wickedness of the world. It bothers us to see the wicked prospering and the good work of the Lord and the gospel struggling along with so many obstacles and problems. But this text encourages us to persevere faithfully, for there is a harvest and a just ending to this world. Our faith will be fully vindicated, and evildoers will be judged. God's kingdom will climax in a mighty day of justice. God will sort out the good and the evil.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Most of us enjoy the challenge of a good riddle. The best riddles challenge our minds to solve a problem of language and logic. They can prove hard to solve but are also hard to forget. We may puzzle over them for days trying to solve them. When we discover or learn the answer, the best riddles surprise us. We realize that they have exposed our assumptions, our normal ways of thinking. These riddles challenge us to consider how often we may miss the truth because we assume something that is not true. Jesus is known for having taught in parables, a form of speech much like a riddle. Although his parables used commonly understood images and

everyday events, they forced listeners to rethink their understanding of how God was working in the world. The parables combined familiar details with the demand for serious reflection. Today's text is a selection from a much longer discourse that consists mostly of parables. The lessons Jesus taught in these parables challenged widely held (mis)conceptions of how God was to bring about his kingdom.

Parables are prominent in Jesus' teaching in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The term parable translates a Greek word that indicates a saying or story implying a comparison. Jesus' parables always involved such comparisons. The key to their interpretation is observing the comparison that Jesus intended. That intent is signaled by the details of the parable, its context, any explanation that Jesus offered, and the parable's role in his wider teaching. Each parable in today's text begins with some form of the phrase "The kingdom of heaven is like." The term refers to the fulfillment of God's promise to reverse the course of human life, establishing his reign in place of the tyrannous, selfish reign of sin and death. It is a kingdom, as Jesus later told Pilate, that "is from another place" (John 18:36). For Jesus' audience, God's promise of a future kingdom had a strongly nationalistic focus. Many in Jesus' day expected God's promised kingdom to bring about the defeat of Israel's enemies, meaning the pagan empires that had ruled God's people for generations (compare Acts 1:6). God's kingdom, in other words, was expected to be a political and military kingdom like any other, only one ruled righteously and in submission to God. One way Jesus challenged this expectation was through parables. These gave a very different vision of God's promised kingdom. The sudden, decisive action of a powerful military ruler was not Jesus' picture. He used instead comparisons to farming, which involves patience, trust, and the passing of time. Rather than depict dramatic, obvious events that would capture the world's attention, he spoke of subtle but powerful processes that were hard to see except by the eye of faith. Earlier in the context of today's passage from Matthew 13, Jesus had delivered and explained a parable about a man sowing seed in a field. The message of the kingdom of God is not something that yields instant, universal success. Rather, it often seems unsuccessful at first, as people respond without persistent faith to the good news of the kingdom. For those ready to hear and heed, Jesus explained his teaching. For others, the seeming difficulty of the message itself seemed to turn them away from belief. God's kingdom, Jesus taught, would divide people. Such divisions are apparent in the parables of our text as well.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matt 13:24-30)

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'

29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." "

Seed sown by God (24-25)

Good seed are sown by God through Jesus (Matt 13:37)

37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

Good seed stand for the sons of the kingdom (Matt 13:38)

38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,

Good seed are imperishable (1 Peter 1:23)

23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Good seed remain in us and keeps us from continuing to sin (1 John 3:9)

9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

Seed sown by Satan (25-26)

Tare seed are sown by the devil (Matt 13:39)

39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

Tare seed sower was hurled from heaven to earth (Rev 12:9)

9 The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Tare seed stand for sons of the evil one (Matt 13:38)

38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,

Tare seed secretly slip in among God's people (Jude 1:4)

4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Temporary coexistence ((27-28)

Temporary coexistence but can be distinguished because they won't serve God (Mal 3:18)

18 And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Temporary coexistence because both the good and bad have been called (Matt 22:10-12)

10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless.

Temporary coexistence but will not be prepared when Jesus returns (Matt 25:6-13)

6 "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' 7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 9 "No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' 10 "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. 11 "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' 12 "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

Temporary coexistence that will not be judged until Jesus returns (1 Cor 4:5)

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Eternal separation (29-30)

Eternal separation because of not understanding God (Isa 27:10-11)

10 The fortified city stands desolate, an abandoned settlement, forsaken like the desert; there the calves graze, there they lie down; they strip its branches bare. 11 When its twigs are dry, they are broken off and women come and make fires with them. For this is a people without understanding; so their Maker has no compassion on them, and their Creator shows them no favor.

Eternal separation because of being arrogant evildoers (Mal 4:1)

4 "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them.

Eternal separation because God commands them to depart from Him into the eternal fire (Matt 25:41)

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Eternal separation because of not remaining in God (John 15:6)

6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31-32)

31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,

32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

Small seed (31)

Small seed that is the smallest planted (Mark 4:30-32)

30 Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground.

Small seeds that will grow (Luke 13:18-19)

18 Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches."

Small seed that God can make into a mighty nation (Isa 60:22)

22 The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the Lord; in its time I will do this swiftly."

Small seeds are sometimes despised (Zech 4:10)

10 "Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "(These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range throughout the earth.)"

Large tree (32)

Large tree planted by God that will be shelter and shade (Ezek 17:23-24)

23 On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. 24 All the trees of the field will know that I the Lord bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. "I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it."

Large tree that is abundantly yielding fruit for all to be fed (Dan 4:12)

12 Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

Large tree that God ensures is well watered (Ps 104:16-18)

16 The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. 17 There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees.

Large tree that God will make into a mighty one (Isa 60:22)

22 The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the Lord; in its time I will do this swiftly."

Parable of the Leaven (Matt 13:33)

33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Hidden impact (33)

Hidden because of being part of the mystery of God (Col 2:2-3)

2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Hidden by God until the time was right for revealing it (Eph 3:9)

9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Hidden with Jesus in God (Col 3:3)

3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Hidden but will be given to the ones who overcome through the Holy Spirit (Rev 2:17)

17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

Resulting impact (33)

Impact of shining like the full light of day (Prov 4:18)

18 The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

Impact of being guided into all truth (John 16:12-14)

12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

Impact of God completing His work in us (Phil 1:6)

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Impact of being kept blameless until the coming of Jesus (1 Thess 5:23-24)

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

Impact of gaining abounding love and insight (Phil 1:9)

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Allen Carr

Matt. 13:24-30 WHEAT OR TARES?

Intro: In this chapter, Jesus gives no less than 8 parables. In these "earthly stories with heavenly meanings" Jesus speaks about God's plan of salvation, the work of Satan, the fickle nature of the human heart and the greatness of the kingdom of heaven. After Jesus had finished telling the first four parables, the disciples came to Him to ask Him a question. Notice verse 36. They didn't ask about the sower, the soils or the seed; they didn't ask about the mustard seed or the leaven. When they asked Jesus to explain a parable, they asked Him to explain the one that is the focus of our attention this morning; the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Why did they choose this one over all the others? Well, the Bible doesn't say for sure, but I am going to venture a guess. My guess is that this parable contained some element or the other that troubled these 12 men. And, I have to honest and tell you ,some of the elements of this parable bother me! By way of introduction, let's examine this parable using Christ's own explanation of it and notice some reasons why this parable, of all the eight He told that day, caught the attention of the disciples.

III. The Context. A farmer plants a wheat field. He uses good seed and plants the crop expecting a good harvest. However, while he and his servants slept, his enemy entered his field and planted tares among the wheat. What are "tares"? Basically, they are weeds that go by the name "Bearded Darnel". In the early stages of its development, it looks exactly like wheat. It is only when the plant has matured and the kernels have form in the head of the genuine wheat plant that the 2 plants can told one from the other. The bottom line is this: The wheat has fruit in its head, while the head of the tares is filled with little black seeds. So, the field looks good, the farmer is getting excited about harvesting a bumper crop. It seems that there is more wheat growing than he expected, (Ill. the word "among" verse 25). However, as the harvest grew nearer, it became apparent that there were tares among the wheat. The servants discover the tares and come in to tell the master about the problem. You see, they were able to tell the difference because as the wheat develops, and the kernels grow inside the head of the wheat plant, the weight of the kernels causes the wheat stalk to bend, making the head appear to be bowing toward the earth. The tares, on the other hand, have light heads and they continue to stand straight and tall! The servants see the problem and offer to pull up the tares, but the master, knowing that the roots of the tares have intertwined with those of the wheat, forbids them. He knows that if the tares are pulled up, that much of the wheat will be uprooted along with them. His counsel is to let them grow together until the harvest, then he will send in the reapers to gather the tares first and bind them to be burned. Then the wheat will be gathered and placed in his barns.

In explaining this parable, Jesus gives His disciples, and us, the identities of those involved in this story. The sower os Christ. The good seed is the Gospel of grace. The one who sowed tares is the devil. The wheat are those who are saved. The tares are those who are unsaved, but have the appearance of salvation. The tares are those in the church who look saved, act saved, sound saved, but who are in truth deceived about their salvation. The tares are those who expect to go to heaven when they die, but will, in fact, go to hell! You see, just like tares, lost sinners, even those who act saved, are good for one thing and one thing only, and that is to be burned.

I am almost 100% sure that I am preaching to some today who are tares. Now, you think you are saved. You hope to are saved. You know the lingo of the church, you look saved and act as saved as anyone around you, but you have never really been born again.

I have just one objective in preaching this message, and that is to get each of you to do what the Apostle Paul commanded the Corinthians to do, 2 Cor. 13:5, "**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?**", and to do what the Apostle Peter told his readers to do in 2 Peter 1:10, "**Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence**

to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" The question may come this morning, "Preacher, why are you preaching this message to us?" The answer is: I don't want you to go through life being deceived about your salvation and ending up in hell! I want you to be sure that you are saved by the grace of God!

Are you wheat? Or, are you tares? Someone might say, "Preacher, we're all saved today! There's no need for a message like this!" Friend, you don't know that! You say, "I know that my Mama is saved!" No you don't! "I know my Daddy is saved!" No you don't! "Well, I know my kids are saved!" No you don't! The truth is, you don't know about anyone but yourself, and you may even be wrong about that! Think about this, there are over 200 million Americans who are church members. If they are all saved, then why is there crime, abortion, drinking, drugs, sexual immorality and hellish living in our society? If they are all saved, then why do young people who claim to be saved have premarital sex at the same rate as the world? The truth of the matter is that people often think that they are wheat when they are in fact tares. Allow me to share 3 brief thoughts with you that tell what the wheat and the tares have in common, but which also point out what makes them so different.

While I preach this message, I beg you not to tune me out. Please let the Lord speak to your heart today. If you are saved, this message won't hurt you, but if you are lost, it could be the turning point of your life. Let God speak to you today.

I. V. 24-25 **BOTH WERE PLANTED TOGETHER**

Both the wheat and the tares shared the common experience of having been planted. The difference in the experience is revealed in 2 very important ways.

A. **The Character Of The Seed** - Obviously, the wheat seed produced wheat while the tare seed produced tares. On a spiritual level, the "seed" is that thing that we have placed our faith in. For the genuine believer, the "seed" is the Gospel of grace. The truly born again person is trusting Jesus Christ alone for their salvation. The tares, on the other hand, may be trusting in any number of emotional, spiritual or physical experiences for their salvation. It all comes down to where you have placed your faith. What are you trusting in for your salvation?

(III. There may be someone who says, "Preacher, my Mama assures me that when I was little, I trusted Jesus." Friend, your Mama cannot assure you of your salvation! You had better not depend on the assurances of others when it comes to your eternal destiny. Another might say, "it's all kind of fuzzy, and I don't remember much about it, but everyone tells me that I have been saved." Folks, we need to realize that Hell will be filled with people who are basing their salvation on some "fuzzy" experience they had when they were a child, or some emotional experience during some revival or good service. What we need to understand is that salvation only comes to a heart that has been convicted of sin and after genuine repentance has taken place. John 6:44 tells us that it is impossible to be saved until the sinner has been drawn to God. My friends, if you have ever been under conviction, you will never forget it. There will be nothing "fuzzy" about that experience!)

The question that must be answered today is this, "Where is your faith?" On what do you base your hope of Heaven? It must be in the Gospel, that is, in the death and resurrection of Christ's atoning work at Calvary, or your faith is in vain!

(III. A flu shot. If you have had one, then you have been injected with a "dead" virus. The doctor gave you this to prevent you from getting the real thing. In a spiritual sense, many church members have been inoculated with a dead religious virus that will prevent them from being saved. They have had some kind of experience and they have been vaccinated against Heaven as a result.)

Be sure your faith is in the right One!

B. **The Character Of The Sower** - The good seed was sowed by the owner of the field, the tares were sown by his enemy. Why did the enemy do this? Obviously it was in an effort to ruin the crop and ultimately, it was an attack upon the farmer.

(III. Satan is in the business of sowing tares among the Lord's wheat. Why? Well, he knows that if he can place the enough of the artificial among the genuine, then he can devastate the entire crop. Satan is in the business of undoing all that the Lord is doing! If he can fill the church with lost church members, then he can fill hell with a multitude of deceived people. If he can mix enough goats in among the sheep, then he can disrupt the harmony and the blessedness of the church. (III. Whenever there is church trouble, you can almost bank on this truth: there is a lost person involved somewhere.) Satan knows that enough lost people in the church will give the

church a bad name. Why? Because the lost can only imitate the saved for so long, then their true nature, like that of the tares will come out!

(III. What I am trying to say today is that you do not need to base your hope of Heaven on some experience or the other. You need to be sure beyond any shadow of a doubt that you have truly trusted Jesus Christ and Him alone for your salvation.)

I. Both Were Planted Together

II. v. 26-30a **BOTH PROGRESSED TOGETHER**

A. **There Was All The Activity Of Wheat** - Now this is interesting, both the wheat and the tares grew. As the wheat grew, so the tares grew alongside them. They did everything the wheat did and they looked good doing it!

(III. I think it is pretty obvious that saved people grow in the Lord. If you stay in church, stay in the Bible and stay in prayer, then you are going to grow and prosper in the things of God. However, did you know that it is possible for the lost church member to grow in the things of the Lord also? Oh yes! Take the Bible for instance. It is a spiritual Book! That is, it takes the right kind of spirit to understand the deep truths of the Bible, 1 Cor 2:14, "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" Now, imagine a lost person who gets deceived into thinking he or she is saved. They sit under preaching where the truths of the Bible are explained and made clear. That lost person can certainly understand the Bible. They can memorize it and know the Bible stories. They can possess all the activities of the genuine believer. Tares in the church sing in the choir, they serve as Deacons and Sunday school teachers, they attend faithfully and come to prayer meeting. They even stand in the pulpit and preach the Word of God. But, just because they have all the activity of the wheat, that does not mean that they are real.)

B. **There Was All The Appearance Of Wheat** - Not only do the tares grow alongside the wheat, but they also look just like the wheat. Until they have matured completely, they are impossible to tell one from the other. If you had wheat in one hand and tares in the other and held them both before your eyes, you would not be able to tell them apart!

(III. That's the way things are in the church. We cannot tell the difference between the genuine and the artificial. The tares in the church dress right, they talk right, they walk right, they give every appearance of being saved. If you examined a real Christian and a tare together, you could not tell them apart.)

(III. That is why we must never be guilty of telling someone that they are saved. Parents should never tell their children that they are saved! Spouses must never tell the other that they are saved! The fact is, you just don't know, unless you happen to be the Holy Spirit, and I don't think you are!)

C. **There Was None Of The Abundance Of Wheat** - So, the tares act like wheat and they look like wheat, but this is where the similarities end. One thing the tare cannot produce is fruit. If you were to open the head of a wheat plant, you would find it filled with wheat kernels. If you opened the head of the tare, you would find it filled with tiny black seeds. One thing the tare could never produce was lasting fruit.

(III. So it is with tares in the church. They give all the external appearances of being the real deal. They look right, act right, talk right and walk right, but when you get right down to it, there is no fruit in their life. What do we mean by fruit? The tares will lack the things that make the genuine believer so special. They will lack the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22-23. They may be able to counterfeit it for a while, but eventually, their true nature will be seen, Gal. 5:19-21. Friend, if you are a tare, you might give all the external appearances of being a Christian, but don't let what you look like and the things that you do be the basis of your assurance. Be sure your faith is in Jesus Christ and in Him alone!)

(III. It is interesting to note the response of the farmer when he was asked about the removal of the tares. His counsel was to allow them both to grow together until the harvest. Why? Because the roots of the tares would intertwine with those of the wheat and if the tares were pulled out, then some of the wheat would be damaged also. The picture here is this: You and I cannot really tell the difference between the genuine and the artificial! If we set ourselves up as judges and start trying to weed out those we think may be tares, we will certainly pull up some of the wheat as well. Judging between the real and the false is God's job and it must remain that way! All we see is the outward appearance, but God is able to look upon the heart, 1 Sam. 16:7, "*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for*

the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." Again, let me caution you against playing the Holy Spirit in the lives of those around you. You do not know who is saved or who is lost. You might even be fooled about yourself!)

I. Both Were Planted Together

II. Both Progressed Together

III. V. 30b BOTH WERE PROCESSED TOGETHER

Eventually the day of harvest arrived. The reapers were sent into the field to gather the tares first, and then the wheat. How could they tell the difference now? It is easy at this stage, because as the wheat matures, the head becomes filled with kernels and the weight of the kernels causes the stalk of the wheat plant to bend toward the ground. The seeds in the head of the tare are light. This allows the tare to stand tall. (III. The picture here is plain and clear. As a genuine believer grows in the Lord he tends to become more humble before the presence of God. The tare, on the other hand, will stand in his pride and go to hell clinging tightly to his false beliefs and foolishness.) When harvest time came, they were both gathered, but they had vastly different ends.

A. **The Tares Were Burned** - These plants were bound together, allowed to dry and were used much like kindling. They were fit for nothing but to be burned. If the tares were accidentally eaten, they caused nausea and dizziness.

B. **The Wheat Was Bared** - The wheat was gathered and taken into the barn. Here it would be processed for human consumption and maybe even sold for a tidy profit by the farmer. He kept the wheat, but had no use for the tares!

(III. The implications here are very clear! When this life has run its course, there are only 2 possible destinations for the human soul. Every person who lives and dies as a tare will find themselves cast into the fires of Hell, to be eternally separated from the presence of God, 2 Thes. 1:8-9; Psa. 9:17. The genuine believer, on the other hand, can look forward to going the Heaven to be gathered into the Lord's House in Heaven, John 14:1-3. The question is, which will it be for you? It all depends on whether you are a tare or you are wheat. Friend, examine yourself carefully this morning. Do not allow yourself to be deceived right into Hell. If your faith is anywhere else but in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you are a tare and you need to be saved today.)

Conc: As we try to bring all of these thoughts together, I would like to close with something of a warning to you. I want to ask you this question: How are tares made? Where do they come from? How do they get into the church? Well, it is the work of Satan, but there are some things that you need to beware of as you walk through life.

1. **Beware Of Good Works** - It is easy to substitute good works for salvation. Often, the tares are not the worst ones we can think of, they are the best. They are busy and active in the church, but they are lost nonetheless. Don't let a seat in the choir, a job in the church, or something good you have done send you to Hell!

2. **Beware Of Good Beliefs** - There is a real danger in coming to a church like this one. The danger is that we tell you the truth and that so much truth is preached and taught here that it is easy to learn the doctrines and to believe the right things, while never actually believing in the right Person! You see, you can believe the Bible and every word in it, and still go to Hell. You don't believe me? Name me a verse that the devil doesn't believe, James 2:19. He believes it all, and even trembles at it, but he will never be saved. You can believe it and go to Hell! It won't make a difference in your life until you bow before the Lord in repentance for your sins and receive the atoning death of Jesus as your only hope of salvation. You can believe in the blood, the resurrection, the virgin birth and every other fundamental doctrine of the faith and still die lost. They cannot help you until you come to Jesus as a lost sinner and repent of your sins. Some of you need to do that this morning! You have grown up under sound Bible preaching, but you have never been born again. You have never been brought under Holy Ghost conviction and repented of your sins. Oh, you belief right, but you have never acted on those beliefs and been saved. Don't let good doctrine send you to Hell!

3. **Beware Of Good People** - There are people all around you that wouldn't hurt you for all the money in the world, but who would send you to Hell without even realizing it. My own grandmother almost did it to me. Don't ever let the words and assurances of another serve as the foundation for your salvation! Well meaning people can send you to Hell by trying to assure you that you are right with God.

4. **Beware Of Good Feelings** - Sometimes we have emotional services around here. There are some pretty intense feelings during those services. It is easy to feel the emotion and maybe cry a little and even give a

testimony and tell about that time when you were afraid and went to the altar, or when you had some experience or the other. You just need to know that those emotional feelings cannot save your soul! I like the good feelings, but I am not counting on them to get me to Heaven! I am saved whether I feel like it or not because I am trusting Jesus Christ for my salvation. What about you?

God has spoken to some of your hearts this morning. You say, "Preacher, the devil is trying to make me doubt my salvation this morning." I just want to say, I doubt it! There are times when He may do that. When you are genuinely saved and trying to serve the Lord, he may come to you and tell you that you aren't saved and cannot serve the Lord in an effort to defeat you. But, in a service like this, the devil would be cutting his own throat to tell you that you were lost. If you were and you went to the altar and got saved, he would lose you to God and he doesn't want that. If someone is speaking to your heart and telling you that you are a tare and that you are lost, it's the Holy Spirit. He is calling you to come and get it settled today. Friend, if He is calling you right now, please let nothing or no one stand in your way. Get to this altar and get in nailed down right now. Don't let pride or what others might think about you to hold you back. Don't let your position in the church stop you. If God is calling come to Him today. If there is the slightest twinge of doubt in your heart, get to the altar, get to God and get it settled right now and forever. Others have done it in the past, today, it is your time. You come and honor the call of the Lord in your heart. Allow Him to transform you from a tare into the real deal right now.

(Adapted from URL:http://www.sermonnotebook.org/new%20testament/matt%2013_24-30.htm)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

None of us likes having to be patient—we just don't like to wait! We all prefer to get what we need immediately. When we are victimized by injustice and evil, we want relief and vindication without delay. The promise of God's kingdom is that God will certainly bring that relief and vindication. Our holy and just God cannot abide evil and injustice forever. His kingdom promises to defeat the devil and his works, creating "a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). But the kingdom of God that Christ establishes does not bring about the defeat of evil all at once. The separation happens not at the beginning but at the end. For now the kingdom operates quietly, almost invisibly, like a tiny seed that grows or like yeast that makes dough rise. As that happens, the Lord calls on people to have ears that hear, to heed his call to turn to him in repentance and receive the blessing of his mercy before it is too late. If the full reign of God takes longer to occur than his people want, it is only to allow more people the opportunity to become subjects of the kingdom (2 Peter 3:9). Meanwhile, God supplies the strength for his people to wait faithfully, to serve faithfully, and to see the true impact of his seemingly invisible kingdom. What part of God's future reign do you wish you could experience now? How do you see his kingdom at work as you wait? How has God enabled you to wait with patience? As we reflect on questions like these, we understand what it means to live with ears that hear Jesus' message of God's reign.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. Sometimes our enemies do everything they can to ruin our good work (Matt. 13:24-26)
2. It is important to seek counsel rather than to rush forward and make hasty decisions (vs. 27)
3. Choosing to wait rather than immediately reacting is a sign of wisdom (vss. 28-29)
4. At the appointed time, those who do not belong to God will be permanently separated from those who do (vs. 30)
5. God can cause those who seem insignificant to become people of importance (vss. 31-32)
6. Seemingly small acts can have enormous results (vs. 33)