

LESSONS FROM HEAVEN FOR LIFE ON EARTH- The Parables - Pt 7
Sunday, September 12th, 2021, 6:30 p.m. - Teaching # 2126
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THE PARABLE OF THE *OTHER* SOWER

Matthew 13:24-30 - “He put another parable before them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, [25] but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. [26] So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. [27] And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ [28] He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ [29] But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. [30] Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

Matthew 13:36-43 - “Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” [37] He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. [38] The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, [39] and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. [40] Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. [41] The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, [42] and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

This parable follows logically right on the heels of the parable of the four soils. This parable *layers another level of truth over the previous one.*

1) **WE ARE NEVER TO FORGET THERE IS A SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL MIND ORCHESTRATING OPPOSITION TO GOD'S WORK IN THIS WORLD**

Matthew 13:24-25 - "He put another parable before them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, [25] but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.'"

Matthew 13:38-39 - "The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, [39] and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels."

The enemy - the devil - does everything in his power to prevent the root of God's Word from taking hold in our hearts. We saw this clearly in the parable of the four soils. He steals the word from the hard heart - the ***wayside soil***. He promotes the kind of stubbornness under the surface of lives that won't respond - won't budge or change - like the ***rocks under the surface of the soil***. He crowds the life with the ***thorns*** - the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, so the Word gets choked out in our hearts.

And then there's the **good soil**. The Word is embraced with understanding and affection. It is heard with obedience and trust.

Room is made for the dominance of the Word in the heart, bringing fruitfulness and harvest unto eternal life. **Then** Jesus tells **this** parable about the work of the enemy **after** the good soil has made its response to the Word.

If the devil can't **prevent** the Word, he will **oppose** the word. That's what this parable is all about. It's about the kind of **opposition** we can expect in this world as we try to obey and follow the Lord. It's about the devil's hatred of the growth of God's kingdom in this world. He never quits. He does everything in his power, for his limited amount of time, to bring opposition to bear against Christ's cause.

This parable deals in word pictures with a truth we have all **experienced** at some point in daily living. Why is there so much anger and opposition to the proclamation of the gospel and the Lordship of Jesus Christ in this world? Why is every religious leader tolerated except Jesus? Why do people embrace Jesus' golden rule but reject Him as man's only Savior? Why are there whole empires on God's earth that **forbid** the gospel? What did Jesus do to deserve such treatment?

Or, why is it so hard to teach and instill standards of holiness and purity in young minds? Why is it that whenever you try to teach basic standards of righteousness to families or congregations or students you feel there are whole industries devoted to capturing their minds in the opposite direction? Who is making wickedness and stupidity so popular and appealing? Who is greasing the downward path for those who are lazy in studying truth and holiness.

That's what this parable is all about. Jesus says there is an enemy - **verse 25** - “....but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.” Notice that it says “**his enemy.**” The enemy is not really that interested in you and me at all. The devil is first and foremost ***His*** - Christ's - God's enemy.

If you're going to think like Jesus, you have to think about this enemy. Jesus traced the opposition to His Word and work in this world ***back behind*** the visible structures and personalities. He traced opposition back to a source the news networks will never show you. There's a real devil, and he works hard opposing Christ and those who follow Him in this world.

- 2) **THE PARABLE SHOWS THE NEED FOR BOTH *PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING* IN CHRIST'S CHURCH IF SHE IS TO ENDURE THE RACE UNTIL HE COMES AGAIN**

The Jews, including the disciples, had certain **expectations** of the Messiah's coming that led them to false understanding and false hopes as to what Jesus would do when He first came to establish His kingdom. You can partially understand their confusion. Perhaps they had heard John the Baptist thundering these words:

Matthew 3:1-3, 10-12 - "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, [2] 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' [3] For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'....[10] Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [11] I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. [12] His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

There, that's what Jesus will do with His enemies. He will come with such blazing power and authority that, finally, He will crush all opposition. Finally, the King will rule with unchallenged authority. You can tell this was their expectation by some of their reactions. For example, look at what James and John said when the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus' message:

Luke 9:51-56 - "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. [52] And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. [53] But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. [54] And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' [55] But he turned and rebuked them. [56] And they went on to another village."

That's what the Messiah should do with these wicked people. Burn them up! Get the opposition out of the way. And the fact that Jesus didn't do that gave birth to doubts as to His authenticity as the Coming One from God.

John the Baptist, so praised for his greatness by Jesus Himself, almost gave up on Jesus around this very issue:

Matthew 11:2-6 - "Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples [3] and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" [4] And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: [5] the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. [6] And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

It's not that John was afraid to face persecution or even death. These words of John weren't born out of **fear**, but rather, out of **confusion and doubt**. The Messiah was supposed to come and trample His enemies. He was supposed to put an end to persecution and oppression. **Then why was John in prison?** Had he missed something? Why were the enemies partying upstairs, totally unhindered and victorious? Why was righteous John soon to face execution? Where was that winnowing fan, and that sword cutting into the root of wickedness and oppression?

This isn't just some remote theological issue. This is a hot coal in the minds of many people today. You've heard the question a thousand times - **"Where is God when the world spits in His face? Why does so much wickedness, blasphemy and persecution go unchallenged?"**

Jesus reminds His church that His is not the **only** kingdom being built in this world. Remember the presence of the enemy. See the root of the evil that pervades this present worldly scene. If you're looking for these things to evaporate, you're going to be frustrated and discouraged.

Here's why this is so important:

- 3) **THIS PARABLE NOT ONLY DEALS WITH WHERE OPPOSITION AND WICKEDNESS COME FROM, IT TELLS THE CHURCH WHAT SHE SHOULD DO ABOUT IT**

There's a lesson in this parable that progressive Christians find hard to accept:

Matthew 13:28-30 - "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' [29] But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. [30] Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

“An enemy has done this.” That’s where the opposition comes from. Now the laborers have an idea - a solution to the problem. **“We’ll go out and tear up the weeds by the roots!”** No, that’s not the master’s solution - **“You’ll do more harm than good that way. I’ll deal with this problem at the judgement - at harvest time.”**

Let me say this in a way that is as striking and rememberable as I can. ***It is not the role of the church to stamp out all the wickedness in this world. It is not the job of the church to win every debate. It is the job of the church to proclaim the gospel and convert the lost to Christ.***

Don’t be confused here. It ***is*** the job of the church to correct, punish, and at times even expel and discipline wickedness ***in the church body***. Jesus, Paul and others deal with this point very directly in the Scriptures.

But Jesus isn’t talking about the ***church*** in this parable. He’s talking about the ***world*** - **verse 38** - **“...the field is *the world*.”** And Jesus says it is a huge mistake - it is ***spiritually wrong*** - for the church to spend her time sniffing out and rooting up all the agents of wickedness in the world.

Here’s the church’s job description from the lips of Jesus:

Matthew 28:18-20 - “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

Or, here is the same idea from the pen of Paul:

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

That's the mission of the Church. She is to call people everywhere to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son, our only Redeemer. Then, as people come to Christ, they must lead others to Christ. And these Christians move out into their own worlds. They become Christian police officers, Christian teachers, Christian parents, Christian politicians, and Christians in the media. And they, as individual Christians, become salt and light. People see their good deeds and come to glorify their Father in heaven.

And so, in Jesus' parable, these noble workers are all set. They're angered by the weeds of the enemy. They are armed with hot convictions and spades and shovels. They are chewing at the bit to eliminate the weeds of wickedness in the field. And then, in comes Jesus, waving red flags, blowing the whistle - ***"No! No! That's not the way! Don't put your energies there! Your calling isn't to eliminate evil. Your call is to intercede in prayer and proclaim the gospel!"***

This is always the reminder the church needs to receive. Read your New Testament. Aren't you surprised that neither Jesus, nor Paul, nor Peter, nor James, nor John says one sentence about the evils of slavery and what the church should do about it. Slavery was ***the*** social and moral blemish of the day. And yet, the New Testament, written in an age when this evil invaded every part of society, doesn't say a word about it.

Why? Wasn't God against slavery? Yes, He was. But the Bible was never written to be a moral handbook for all people, regardless of saving faith or not, to achieve a more just life in this fallen world. Nor was the church called to eradicate these evils from society at large.

The **Bible** was written to trace God's saving plan from Old Testament prediction through to New Testament fulfillment. And the **Church** exists to make sure that same message reaches every person on earth **before** Jesus returns.

"Then what about all those weeds of opposition and persecution and wickedness that constantly war against Christ's Kingdom?"

Here's what Jesus said in this parable:

4) **CHRISTIANS MUST LABOR WITH FULL CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT AT THE END OF THE AGE**

Matthew 13:30 - "Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Then, Jesus explained those words even further:

Matthew 13:39-43 - “...and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. [40] Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. [41] The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, [42] and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

The destruction and elimination of the forces of wickedness is clearly taken out of our hands. Some things **are** our work and some things **aren't**. Some things will happen **now** and some things won't happen until **later**. I can't stop all those who marshal the cause of sexual perversion and homosexuality. I can't stop those who assemble and plan with the sole agenda of taking the lives of pre-born children in this world. I can't stop the strife of greedy nation against greedy nation. As a Christian **citizen** I can vote and lobby and protest. And I should make all the difference I can make. But the **church** has a different role from the Christian **citizen**.

But I'll tell you what I do know for sure. And I'll tell you what I have to do to be ready for my appointment before the Judge of this world:

Ephesians 6:10-20 - “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. [14] Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. [16] In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; [17] and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, [18] praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, [19] and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Isn't it interesting that with all that wickedness and iniquity in high places, all Paul prays for is ***boldness to proclaim the gospel?*** I'll tell you why. Paul knows there is a day coming when every other evil will be made right. Pick any one you want. God will gather the righteous and burn up the wicked. Jesus said so. You can read about that event in detail in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 11:15-18 - "[15] Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." [16] And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, [17] saying, 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. [18] The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

Every evil will be dethroned and every wrong will be undone on that day - except one. It will be too late for anyone else to come to Christ. That is one situation that will not be transformed at the judgement.

Church, we must labor with that judgement in mind. There are all sorts of good causes in which, **as a Christian citizen**, you can raise your voice and take your stand. God bless you for it. **But as the Church**, let's pour all our energies and resources into our Lord's calling and commission. **If we don't do it, no one else will.** And that's when the enemy smiles.