

CW-A Gospel - Pentecost 9 - Aug 10, 2014 - Kieth Bernard Kuschel

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Matthew 13:24-30, 36- 43

{24} Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. {25} But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. {26} When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. {27} "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?' {28} "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' {29} "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. {30} 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.'" (36) 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." {37} He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. {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, {39} and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. {40} "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. {41} 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. {42} They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where 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.

Switch sugar and salt in sugar bowl and salt shaker.

Can do this because they look alike.

Do believers and unbelievers look alike?

To people?

To God?

Today's parable presents a problem caused by two things that looked a lot alike.

The question was which was Wheat and which was Weed.

Switch salt & sugar

WEEDS OR WHEAT

I. Source

A. Good seed

1. Must have good seed
2. Jesus produces believers

B. Weeds

1. Enemy gets back
2. Devil works among Xians

C. Difference

1. Scattered seed; darnel
2. Can't tell difference
3. Unbelievers look like Xians
4. Am I a fake?
5. There are fakes around me

II. Solution

A. Pull them up?

1. Intertwined
2. Save the harvest

B. Coexistence

1. Pull anybody up who sins??
2. Patient discipline
3. Let God do judging

C. We are supposed to judge

1. Hypocrites aren't obvious
2. Let God handle it

III. Satisfaction

A. "Too many hypocrites

1. World doesn't need church
2. I do sin
3. I shouldn't turn people away
4. Plead for people to look to Jesus

B. Can we do anything?

1. Discuss visible/invisible church
2. Teach Law & Gospel
3. Do what God tells us to do

IA1 Who provided the good seed? The farmer. He needed to produce a crop to support himself and his family. He bought the seed or saved it from last year. Good seed is important. Bad seed doesn't produce well. Do any of you ever stock up in the spring on the seed packs that are \$.10 @. If they turn out to be bad seed, then it's not such a good deal.

2 In the explanation Jesus says He is the farmer and the results of His sowing are "sons of the kingdom." "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. {38} The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom." Jesus makes it possible for us to be "children of the kingdom." Without His death all of us would be judged guilty by God and doomed to an existence outside of God's kingdom. Without His holy life all of us are without the perfection that makes us able to be "children of the kingdom." Without Jesus' message of forgiveness, holiness, and eternal life, we would not have been adopted into God's kingdom.

B1 Who supplied the bad seed? The enemy. This seems to have been a common practice in Jesus' day. Any guesses on why people would do this? If you had rented some land and then the landlord rented it to someone else, you got back at the owner by doing this. If you wanted to ruin your competitor's crop, you did this.

2 In the explanation Jesus says the enemy is the devil and the results of his sowing are "sons of the evil one." Where does he do his work? In the wheat field. (Among the believers.) Why? He doesn't have to work hard among the ungodly. They are already doing his work. He expends most of his effort in the wheat field, among us. He wants us to be going along with his ways.

C1 Why didn't they just go in and pull up the weeds between the rows as you do when you weed in the garden? Because they didn't plant in rows. They just took handfuls of wheat seeds and threw them. And because these weeds called darnel look just like wheat.

2 So here you have stuff that looks just like wheat. It took space away from the wheat. It was using the food from the soil that the wheat needed. It took water that the wheat needed. But nobody could tell the difference until pretty late in the season when the heads formed.

3 Jesus said the weeds are "sons of the evil one." But these followers of the devil look just like wheat. They look just like Christians on the surface. Their lives look like Christian lives. They are probably members of a Christian congregation. They, however, don't believe that Jesus is the Savior and only way to eternal life.

4 This parable is a warning to us. The warning is: it is possible to look like wheat and be a weed. It is possible to look like a son of the kingdom and not be one. It is possible to look like a Christian on the surface and not be one. Have you asked yourself questions like these recently? Am I wheat or am I a weed and just look like wheat? Do I really believe that Jesus lived and died and rose for me, or do I just make it look and sound that way on the surface? Am I putting on a show so that I look like a follower of Jesus, but I am really a follower of the evil one, the devil?

5 There is another aspect of that warning. Some of the wheat that is around us might really be weeds. Some of the people around us who use the same Word of God, who occupy the same kinds of space in this life that we do, including congregational space, are not Christians, although they appear to be Christians on the surface of things. The source of their spiritual existence is the devil, not the Lord.

IIA1 The servants had a quick solution for the problem. What was it? 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' {29} "No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may

root up the wheat with them.” What had occurred? The roots had become intertwined.

2 What was the farmer’s solution? {30} 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.” He realized that the weeds would hinder the growth of the wheat. He realized the harvest would not be as big. But at least he would have a harvest.

3 At harvest time it wouldn’t make any difference. The harvesters would pull up all the weeds first. It wouldn’t matter if in the process they pulled up the roots of the wheat too. As soon as they got all the weeds in, they went back out and pulled up the half uprooted wheat anyway. Nothing of the crop would be lost.

B1 Some of the wheat that is around us might really be weeds. Some of the people around us who use the same Word of God, who occupy the same kinds of space in this life that we do, including congregational space, are not Christians, although they appear to be Christians on the surface of things. What do we do with that information? Do we intensively try to figure out which people are weeds and then declare them not part of the kingdom? When we see a brother or sister sinning, do we immediately conclude that person is not a part of the kingdom? If that were appropriate, then every time we sin, we should be declared not a part of the kingdom. If we did that, many wheat plants would be uprooted.

2 What do we do with that information that some wheat might be weeds? Not much. We appreciate godliness. We discipline ungodliness. We reinforce God’s truth. We correct false teaching and belief. We understand the Christians who sin aren’t hypocrites. All of us sin. We need to realize that if hypocrites are doing a good job and really look like Christians, we can’t tell who they are.

3 God is the only one who can look into people’s hearts. He is the only one who can determine if a person is not what he appears to be. So, we let Him do the judging. We let the ultimate uprooting of people from their apparent positions as members of God’s family to God. “The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. {40} “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. {41} 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. {42} They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

C1 Wait a minute. I thought we are supposed to point out people’s sins to them to bring them to repent and to be able to point them to Jesus. We are. Hypocrites look like good Christians. They are moral. They don’t teach false doctrine. You can’t discipline hypocrites if they are doing a good job. Why? You can’t tell who they are.

2 So what are we to do with the information that there are some who look like wheat but are really weeds? Recognize that they can hinder our growth. They can lessen our production. But God is the only one who can tell who they are. So what are we to do with the information that there are some who look like wheat but are really weeds? Not much. Since God is the only One who knows who they are, and since God is the only one who can harvest them, we probably shouldn’t even think much about them. That’s the solution. That’s God’s solution.

IIIA1 Some of you know that this whole problem of “hypocrites” is an issue with lots of people. When you knock on peoples’ door and ask them if they go to church somewhere, they often say, “I can be a good person without running to church every week. I am a lot better person

than lots of people who run to church every week. They run to church. Then they come back home and lie, steal, cheat in business, cheat on their marriage partner, get drunk and on and on. Why should I bother to go to church with a bunch of hypocrites?”

2 What do you do with that criticism? Think about it. I run to church every week because I am a sinner. I need the forgiveness which Jesus won for me when He died on the cross. I need the holiness which He lived in my place for me. I need the eternal life which He won by His resurrection. I need strength from the Lord to conquer sin. I get that strength from the Word of God. People are going to see Christians sin. Why? Because we sin.

3 What do we do with that criticism? Think about it. My life ought to be reflecting the holiness which Jesus gives me. My neighbors should see that most of the time in my life I am trying to do things God’s way. They might know I am a sinner because they see me sin. But they should not be able to say that I run to church and then come home and lie and steal and cheat and get drunk etc. If that is true, I need to repent of my sins. But I also need to repent of my actions which have led other people away from the Lord Jesus.

4 What do we do with such criticism? Respond honestly. Maybe something like this. “Christians are sinners. We go to church to be reminded that we are sinners and need the forgiveness of Jesus and strength from Jesus to conquer sin. Some people who run to church maybe aren’t really Christians. But please don’t judge Jesus on the basis of my failures. Please don’t judge Jesus on the basis of people who might not be His followers. Please evaluate Jesus on the basis of Jesus - His love, His forgiveness, His life, death and resurrection all done for you.”

B1 What can we do about the weeds that are among us, the unbelievers who look like believers in the pews next to us since we can’t root them up and throw them out? It sounds as if we can’t do anything. We are doing something. We discuss the issue periodically based on Jesus’ words as we are doing this morning. We teach about the issue. Any of you remember the difference between the visible and the invisible church from Catechism class? The visible church is made up of earthly groups of people who gather around the Word of God. In such groups there can be hypocrites. The invisible church is the sum total of the people who believe that Jesus is the Savior. If a person is a member of a visible church, but not a believer in Jesus, that person is not a member of the invisible church and will not go to heaven. By discussing this and teaching about it we are trying to get people to see they can fool people but they can’t fool God.

2 But there is something even more important that we are doing about the hypocrisy issue. We are teaching the Law of God which shows people that they are sinners. The Holy Spirit can convince anyone including hypocrites that they are sinners. We teach the Good News of Jesus Christ. It tells people that Jesus lived and died and rose for everyone. The Holy Spirit can convince anyone including hypocrites that Jesus is the Savior. When He does that, those people aren’t hypocrites anymore. So, the best place for hypocrites is here at church, hearing the Law and the Gospel.

3 How can we satisfy our desire to do something about the hypocrisy issue? Just do what God tells us to do. Live our lives to His glory. Talk about the Law and the Gospel whenever we are given the opportunity. Don’t worry about whether we are dealing with wheat or weeds. We want them all to be taken into the Lord’s barn on harvest day. The fertilizer of the Gospel not only makes the wheat grow, but it also turns weeds into wheat. Be satisfied with our God assigned tasks. Let God do His thing, conducting the harvest. Lord Jesus, please help me to do my job of talking about You and let You do Your job of harvesting.