

GOD'S WEEDEATER

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 Text: vs. 41-42 *“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 blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Today, we begin with Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares. It follows where we last week left off last week about growing a crop in good soil. But this parable has lost a bit in translation. The word used here as “*tares*” or “*weed*” has a much stronger word. “Darnel”. Darnel is a weed that looks like wheat and grows like a weed in the same fields as wheat. Until modern machinery, it wasn't possible to really separate Darnel from wheat. In some regions, Darnel is referred to as “*false wheat*” because of its similarity between the two plants. It looks like wheat, until the crop appears. Its buds are slimmer than those of wheat. But wheat is brown when it's ripe. Darnel is black. And Darnel can be infected by a fungus. When it's eaten, it can cause a drunken sickness that can be fatal. Darnel contains a poisonous fungus that grows only in grain fields in the Middle East. Sowing Darnel among wheat was an act of revenge that was punishable by Roman Law.

So, this parable, told by Jesus, probably described a real-life situation where servants wanted to pull up the Darnel, but by doing so, they would ruin the wheat crop. Now, the Bible talks only about *harvesters* or *reapers*. And they are Angels in heaven. The noun “*harvester*” is only used here in the Bible in vs. 30-39. The *verb* for harvest, or reap, occurs 21 times in the whole Bible. So, *untrained* eyes were no match for discovering Darnel weeds among the wheat. But that will be no problem for the Angels. They will comb the field row by row, plant by plant. Nothing will escape their eyes. They won't be using kitchen or gardening tools. They will be using an axe, a scythe, a sickle, a plough, a pitchfork. Angels are the true harvesters chosen, qualified and fit for the job. People's methods for harvesting wheat is in vain. And Jesus goes on to say that on judgment day, two things will burn in the fire: *chaff* and Darnel, called *tares*. (Matt 3:12, Luke 3:17) Chaff is the hull, the outer covering of wheat. It's light as nothing. And the tare, the Darnel, is full of nothing. One is light in weight. The other just takes up space. It's an invader.

But to understand this Parable you must understand the wheat field of which Jesus was speaking is you – *people*. And Tares are children of the Wicked one, (v 38) the devil. (v 39) They offend. “Scandalize” is the word used in Greek and means they “practice lawlessness.” (v 41). The angels harvest the tares, the Darnel. They bind them. They tie them up. They burn them. (v 30) And the Bible doesn't take the Devil's work lightly. There are 38 references to “*the devil*” who causes scandalous, ruthless, and shameful things. He is ill-natured, ill-bred, ill-mannered, and ill-willed, causing Godly people to stumble, spilt the church, change good doctrine, and alter true beliefs in God. The Greek word *scandal* is a trap, or a snare. Something that catches. It's evil. Its followers bring anarchy. They do damage. But they won't be stopped, checked, or defeated. Bad people scandalize. They're immoral. They practice lawlessness. They do unlawful, unethical, and uncivil things.

Isn't that just what we're seeing in our country today? And it's throughout the world! Lawless, unethical, and uncivil activities are taking place, which leads up to our text for today. *“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 blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

A fourth-grade boy stood with his teacher in front of a blackboard with a math problem on it the boy hadn't finished. The boy says to the teacher, “*I'm not an underachiever, you're an over-expecter!*”

Unfortunately, many Christians today are just like that little boy. They are underachievers in *the faith*. But at the same time, they accuse God of being an over-expecter. Setting His expectations too high for them. This attitude threatens our whole society. Especially in educational circles. Some educators believe you shouldn't tell a child the answer is wrong. You should encourage a child “just for trying”. Boost their self-esteem. Feeling good about yourself is more important than getting the right answer. Everyone should be a winner! But shouldn't students feel good about themselves because they get the answer, right? This type of “feel good” education has led America to become number one in illiteracy among developed countries. St. Louis schools have only 10% of their students reading at grade level!

And unfortunately, “feel good” religion has crept into many Christian circles. A lot of Christians today are into *prosperity theology* that teaches financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them. Faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes, usually the preacher's, will increase their material wealth. A lot of TV preachers preach this false gospel. They preach a religion that makes you feel good about yourself, rather than a religion that changes your life! In Galatians 6:1-5 Paul said, *“⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evident-*

ly, some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the Gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!"

A religion that does not transform every area of life, is a religion that's not worth having! A child of God should know that! They should see and hear and hold the True Gospel in their hearts. They should know of the angels' presence in their lives. They should know of the spiritual kingdom. They should know what happens in the Spirit, and wait for the appearance of God's Kingdom here on earth. . . . the day of the harvest of God. And it has come! It's here! The tares, the Darnel are entering the children of God, just as Satan did with the apple in the Garden of Eden.

But God's Angels are here to protect them. Angels will deliver the children of God and minister to the children of God as God promised. Those who are in the faith of Christ Jesus will find Angels present and tending to their needs. The darnel, the tares, will not overtake you. They are *not* the children of God! They grew up with the children of God. But they are the tares planted next to the good seed trying to take over. But as Matthew tells you, *"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So, the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, "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 uproot 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.'"*

Tares!

They will be burned. They weren't supposed to be in His harvest, the harvest, which is the Lord's. And the Lord your God will see to the burning of those tares at the Final Harvest. Is it harvest time, yet? No! But the fields are ready for harvest! Make this parable, *the parable of the Sower*, be a warning to you. You should be walking closer to the Lord in your everyday tasks. Tares are among us. And, if you know you are the good seed in this parable of the Sower, let it speak to you about how God works in you, so that you will grow up safe in the Lord, and be His at the final harvest. **Amen.**