

Jesus' Parables in Chronological Order

Parable #12 — Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 — Weeds Among Good Plants

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.’ ”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

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.”

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Note: this is the first in a series of eight “Kingdom of Heaven” parables and the only one explained by Jesus. After telling this, he expects you to “get it.”

1. Why do people dislike weeds?
2. In this parable, who is the sower? What does the field represent? The wheat? The weeds? The enemy? The harvest? The harvesters?
3. What did the servants volunteer to do for the owner of the field? (Vs 13:28)
4. On what grounds did the owner turn down the servants’ suggestion? (Vs 13:29) How difficult is it to pull up only the weeds from a densely growing bed of flowers, Pachysandra, or even just grass? Can you always clearly identify the weeds from the good plants?
5. What dangers lie in trying to label people as either “weeds” or wheat?”
6. Whose responsibility is it to identify the weeds and deal with them?
7. What does this parable teach about church purity? Divine patience? Human accountability?
8. If you had to guess, what would you say would be the ratio of “wheat” to “weeds” in Morristown (or your home town)?
9. How do these kinds of passages (threats of judgement and harsh punishment for unbelievers) make you feel?
10. In what ways can you “shine like the sun” in your contacts with unbelievers? What does this mean? (Daniel 12:3) What does this say about Christians who try to isolate themselves from non-Christians?
11. It is possible to interpret this parable to mean that whatever you were at birth (weed or wheat) is what you remain to the “end of the age.” What do you think about that?
12. What does this parable teach us about the kingdom of heaven (or kingdom of God)?