

Parable of the Weeds

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It's good to be here today. It's good to have the opportunity to share. I do look around, and I don't recognize everyone.

I'm not going to lie. And that's a good thing. And so whether you're here visiting family, or whether you're here looking for a new church, or just visiting in general, we're happy to have you here. The good news with that said is if you don't enjoy the next 20, 30 minutes here, you can come and listen to someone else next week. So that's the good thing about that, is you just got to put up with me for this week.

But it's good to be here and worship together and have the opportunity to share. Nate texted me early this morning asking if it was okay if he did his children's church, whatever sermon, whatever you want to refer to it as.

And I said, of course, that's fine. Apparently it was scheduled for next week. And I think it's fitting that it was moved up to this week. If you look on the screen, we're going to be looking at the parable of the weeds today.

[1 : 06] And although my children consider dandelions to be flowers, I most certainly consider them to be a weed. And whether that's in our yard, or whether that's in a field, whatever it might be, we definitely consider it to be a weed.

And I am one who, whether it's mowing off or spraying to kill, we do not like to have dandelions around. So while my children pick them and bring them into the house and think that they've found the greatest thing ever, and they want us to put it in a vase and all this type of stuff, that is not how I operate.

But we go along with it for a time or two to start the spring, and then we try to have those eliminated. But anyways, we're going to be looking at Matthew chapter 13 today.

If you have your Bibles, that's where we're going to be. I kind of struggled to a point trying to figure out what I was going to preach on. It was kind of a more eventful week than I think coming into the week I thought it might be.

For some reason, we were spared by much of the rain this week, and it would just get rained out enough for a few hours or the rest of the day, and then we were back at it. So I think a lot of times this time of the year, because of my occupation, and if you don't know, I'm a farmer.

[2 : 27] And so because of that, as we're out in the fields, whether we're planting or whether we're doing some field work or spraying, did some spraying this week to eliminate those dandelions, whatever it might be, a lot of times I'm brought back to passages such as this one, where Jesus, in the Gospels, we see numerous parables that are recorded in ways that he taught.

And they come back to me, one, because a lot of times they tie to agriculture or something that's very ordinary. And the reason for that is the parables are simply trying to reach the common person. They're trying to take a big, large concept or idea that might be kind of a struggle to comprehend or bring into your own knowledge, and they try to bring it down to our level, if you will.

So it doesn't require some big theological understanding, or you don't have to understand all of the Scriptures, or you don't have to have any education to understand these things, because Jesus was just talking to regular people.

And regular people at this time oftentimes were involved in agriculture, they were involved in fishing, they were involved in all of these just typical trades that maybe aren't so accustomed here many, many years later.

[3 : 47] But he starts them all out the same, and we're going to read it here in just a moment. But he always starts out with the phrase, the kingdom of heaven is like. And then he goes into his spiel, right?

He goes into helping us understand what the kingdom of heaven is like. And so if you have your Bibles, we're going to be, Matthew chapter 13, as I've said, we're going to read verses 24 to 30, and then we're going to actually skip ahead a little bit and read 36 to 43.

So if you have those, if you would stand with me as we open, as we continue with God's Word. I'm going to be reading from the NIV today.

I know many of you are accustomed to the King James, and I think there's some value in that. I'll get into that in just a moment. It says the following. It says, And we skip ahead a little bit here, verse 36.

He says, Then the crowd left and went into the house. The disciples came to him and said, Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field. He answered, The one who sowed the good seed is the son of man.

[5 : 38] The field is the world, and the good seeds stand for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are the angels.

As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be the end of the age. The son of man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin in all who do evil.

They will throw them into a blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity to open your word this day. We thank you for parables such as this that are so practical for each one of us to understand, that can take these large concepts that might be hard to understand and fathom, and they kind of bring them down to our level.

And so we thank you for that, Lord. We thank you that you are in this place. And we pray that your spirit would continue to have its way in this service here, Lord, as we open your word and study it and see what it has for each one of us, but also maybe what it has for others, maybe others who aren't here this morning, who are our friends, who are our family, who are in need of you.

[7 : 00] So, Lord, we pray that you would just have your way, that you would put any distractions that we have, any baggage that we entered with, and just allow us to put it to the side so we can focus on what you desire for each one of us this day.

We just ask it all in your name and all God's people said, amen. You can be seated. So here, as has already been discussed, we find the parable of the weeds.

And we're going to kind of look at this kind of piece by piece. And we find here that, you know, the disciples are, or as the disciples are questioning later, but we find here that the servants of the master, they've witnessed the seating taking place, and they see it come up, and they see it's, you know, coming, you know, it's growing and so forth, and they realize that there's not only good seed out there, but there's also bad seed.

And where I mentioned earlier that I think there's some value this morning, especially in the King James, is because the King James doesn't lose a bit in translation that I think is extremely important this morning.

You see, in the King James, it doesn't refer to this weed as a weed, but instead refers to it as a tear, I think is how the New King James and probably the King James both refer to it as.

[8 : 21] And I think that's a very important part, because a tear is a weed that looks very, very similar to wheat. It's not just any weed.

Because, you know, when I see something like this, I see a weed, you know, I think about my own fields, right? And I can go out, and we have soybeans that are up out of the ground, and we have corn that's out of the ground. And we can differentiate, which is certainly hope as a farmer, I can differentiate between the good seed and the bad, right?

I can differentiate between the grasses that are out there, the variety of different weeds that have come up. But this is something that they would have struggled with. I think as we kind of read through here, I think it's why it's so important that Jesus says that, you know, don't go weed them out now because you're at risk of weeding out others.

You see, the type of tear that they're talking about here is called bearded darnel. And we'll talk about it a little bit more.

But pretty much wheat, I think probably most all of us are accustomed to what wheat looks like, right? This time of the year, it looks like grass growing out in a field.

[9 : 30] You give it a few more weeks, and there'll be a head that's going to form on there. And you give it a few more weeks after that, you know, the middle to end of June, we'll start to see it ripen and turn, and then we'll have harvests soon after.

And so a wheat head, as each of you know, probably about this long, right? Some shorter, some longer, but approximately this long. And the kernels are consistent from the bottom all the way to the top, right?

At least they better be, otherwise you're not going to have a very good harvest. But they're consistent. There's no skips in the head. It's just kernels from top to bottom.

And that's where the difference lies with this bearded darnel. So it has a similar head, but the difference is that the kernels are in clusters, and there's a skip between them. Okay, so you might have 10 kernels together, and then there's a little bit of a gap.

And there's another 10 kernels and a little bit of a gap. So the problem here is, as Jesus is alluding to, is you wouldn't know until it's pretty much harvest time, until those heads are out, until they're starting to ripen, what the difference between the two were.

[10 : 38] Because it looked as if it was wheat. It appeared as if it was wheat, but it wasn't wheat. And so that is what he's trying to get them to understand, is that there's some confusion that can take place.

You know, if they were to go out once those started to emerge and come up, when it might have been very easy to remove them, they would have been at risk of getting rid of the other ones. You see, not only is bearded darnel a different species, a different type of grass, but it's really not good for you.

See, bearded darnel is poisonous. It's harmful to you. It's going to cause nausea. It's going to cause dizziness. If you actually looked at it in the Greek, and I didn't write down what the Greek term for it is, but it comes from drunkenness.

Like, the name that it's given is in reference to drunkenness, because it creates a lot of the same side effects, if you will, of being drunk. So dizzy, nausea, sickness, all of those type of things.

And so we see here that, once again, as we look at this, and it's kind of more the original text, we get some extra value, I think, in this comparison between the weeds and the wheat and the good seed, right?

[11 : 52] And so, you know, I think it's interesting here that Jesus once again talks about, he's talking about fruit here, right? That's really what the root of it is, is the fruit of it.

And he talks about fruit so many different other places. You know, we could flip over to Matthew chapter 7, and he's talking about being aware of false prophets, and being able to recognize them by their fruit.

And so, it's not a new concept. It's not the first time that he's bringing this up. But we find here that Jesus treats this very seriously. And I think this is something that, unfortunately, many people in our society today need to understand, is that there is a very distinct difference, a very distinct contrast in what happens between the wheat and the weeds, right?

And the tares. And we find that there, at the last little bit of the first section we read, it says, let them, in verse 30, it says, let them 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 them into my barn. So, we find that there's two very distinct differences here, right? One is destroyed, one is burned, and the other one is brought into the barn, right?

[13 : 13] It's gathered up, it's the, you know, your possession, it's what you've been working towards, and so forth. And so, we find that that's kind of what Jesus lays out here initially.

And then we fast forward, Jesus tells a couple other parables. He tells about the parable of the mustard seed, right? About having the faith the size of a mustard seed. And he talks about the parable of the yeast, and so forth.

And so, we see a variety of different things that he talks about. And then the disciples are still stuck on this story. And so, a little bit later, it says that they bring it back up to him. He says, then in verse 36, they left a crowd that went into the house.

His disciples came to him and said, explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field, right? They want to know more. They want to comprehend exactly what he is talking about here. And he lays it out even more.

And I think he goes another step, if you will. He explains every single part of this story, right? In verse 37 to 39, he tells of exactly who is what in this story.

[14:14] He says, the sower is the son of man, right? He's talking about himself. The field is the world. He says, the good seed are the people of the kingdom. He says, the weeds are the people of the evil one.

He refers to that evil one being the enemy, being Satan, being the devil. He says, harvest is at the end of the age. And that the harvesters are the angels, right? He just explains to us once again who each part of this story is.

But he really gets into this contrast to a greater degree here in just a moment. In verses 40 to 43, he says, as the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of the age, right?

He's already kind of laid this out, but he's going a little deeper with it. He says, the son of man will come out, will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and those who do evil.

They will throw them into a blazing furnace where there'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. And so once again, we see the same contrast that was mentioned in verse 30, but he goes into a much, much greater detail with this, right?

[15:28] About the events that are going to take place. You see, I mentioned earlier that I think society and I think people in general maybe have kind of misjudged how God operates because we live in a society that believes that God is a loving God, but they miss the part where God is also just, where he's also jealous, that he's also righteous, right?

And so therefore, people think that if God is so loving, that there is no way that he could condemn someone to hell, right? So therefore, there's no hell that exists because God is a loving person, right?

He's a loving being. There's no way that because he's loving, he could do that. But this here is telling us the exact opposite, right? It's telling us the truth of the situation.

And the truth of the situation is that whether it's when Jesus returns or whether when we take our final breath, our judgment has been sealed, right? We have made our choice on this earth whether to serve God and be a member of the good kingdom, right?

To be a member of his people, to be the good seed, or if we want to be the weed that is going to be destroyed, it's going to be thrown into the fiery furnace, the blazing furnace.

[16:52] And we find greater detail there, right? It's not just darkness, it's not just emptiness, but instead there's weeping, there's gnashing of teeth, right? And so we know there's sorrow, there's sadness, there's grief, there's probably crying.

There might even be remorse, right? There might be regret, right? We also know that there's pain, there's agony. All of these things, right? Which are the exact opposite of what the kingdom of God is like, right?

The heavens that are talked about here. And so the choice is ours, right? And so what is Jesus trying to get them to understand here? He's trying to get them to understand that their choices matter.

And who they put their faith and their trust and their hope in, it matters. And so that is what he's trying to get us to understand too. And thankfully, you know, in a church setting like this, many of us have made this decision many moons ago, right?

Many, many years ago, some of us when we were very young, others of us more recently, have made the choice to put our faith and our trust and our hope in Jesus Christ. And that seals our faith, right?

[18:01] Once we put our faith and our trust in him, we are forgiven for our past failures or our present failures and our future failures. We are sealed. Our name is written down in the book of life.

And we don't have to worry and we don't have to fright about what might come of us, right?

Because we are brought into his family at that point in time. It doesn't matter. There's nothing that we can do.

It says in Scripture, there's nothing that we can do to separate ourselves from the love that God has for us. And so because of that, we can't separate ourselves back from God. Even if we stray, even if we fall at time and we fail, he is still going to consider us his son or his daughter.

And so that is a great promise that we have. Something that we can, you know, we don't have to worry about tomorrow because we know who holds tomorrow and we know who holds us. But the reality is that those who are not believers in Jesus Christ, those who have not put their faith and their trust into him, that is not the same reality.

That is not the same truth. The reality is that they are those weeds that are being discussed at that point in time. Until you put your faith and your trust in him and until you repent of your sins and turn away from that, then you are an enemy of the cross of Christ.

[19 : 14] And all enemies of the cross are exactly that. They're enemies. They're not going to be welcomed into the kingdom of God. They're going to be told that they were not known by the Savior. And so whether that's someone that's sitting here or whether that's our friends, whether that's our family, whether that's even strangers, that's why it's so important for us to do our part, right?

That we are the hands and the feet of Jesus Christ because someone needs to tell them. You know, Jesus here, he was telling the people of how it was, right? He was telling them the kingdom of heaven is like this.

He's laying out the truth of it. He's given the hard truth in some of this, right? He's given them the promises that they have as disciples in him, right? Those who have put their faith and their trust in him.

But he's also given them the other side, right? And showing the urgency of this. You see, in the United States, according to the CDC, and it's probably as good of statistics as we have, but the average life expectancy is 79 years old.

And for males, this is a little scary. I don't know what we're doing, guys. But it's only 76 and a half years. For females, it's actually over 81 years.

[20 : 29] But the reality is that a lot of times there are people who think that they can just make their own decisions and then go about their life. And when they get to that point in life, they'll change their ways, right? They'll put their faith and their trust in Jesus then.

But the reality is that this is an average. Not everyone is going to live to be 79. Some of you are going to live to be much over 79. Maybe some of you already are. But it's an average for a reason. Some people die when they're teenagers. Some people don't even make it to be teenagers. Others make it to their 20s, 30s, 40s. Some live to be over 100. The reality is that we are only promised this moment.

We aren't even promised tomorrow. And that's what Jesus tries to get us to understand. Is that our life is really but a vapor. And we're going to talk a little bit about that in a moment. But in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, this was alluded to last week during the sermon.

Chris brought it up. It says the following in verse 1 and 2. It says, So unlike the plants that have a set plant date, you know, a germination date, they start their life.

[21 : 45] And you can look forward and you can project that they are going to be harvested on this date. That's not the case for us, right? The reality is that, as I mentioned, we have soybeans and we have corn that is planted.

You can do some backwards math. And you can project out when maturity is going to happen on those seeds that are growing, right? And you can probably figure out that harvest on soybeans is probably going to be sometime September 20th to 30th.

And corn, depending on what you want it to be, probably a similar time frame, right? You can figure that out. But that is not the case for us as humans.

We are not promised that. We don't have 79 years that we're all guaranteed. As I mentioned, it's only an average. In James 4, verse 13 through 15, it says, Now listen, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go to this city or that city, spend a year there, carry on business, and make money. Why do you not even know what will happen tomorrow? What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

[22 : 58] Instead, you ought to say, if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that. You see, folks, and I think we all realize this for the most part, we're not promised anything.

We're not promised tomorrow. We're not promised 10 more years, 50 more years. I would like to think that those of us who have children will grow up to be grandparents.

We'll live to be grandparents. We'll see our grandchildren grow up. We'll see our great-grandchildren grow up. But we're not promised that. We might not even see our first grandchild.

We're not promised anything beyond today. We could all go out of here and some horrific accident happens and numerous die in it.

And that's the same truth. It's the sad truth, but it's the reality for every single person who lives on this earth, whether it's natural disasters, whether it's automobile accidents, whether it's sickness, whatever it might be.

[24 : 00] We each deal with the reality that our lives are very fragile. They can be affected in a moment. And so that's why it's so important that there is a sense of urgency. There's a sense of urgency in our own life.

Hopefully, you are a believer in Jesus Christ. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, then you don't have anything to be concerned about. You don't have anything to worry about. If you're not, then you have the utmost to be concerned about.

Because as I mentioned, you are not currently a member of the kingdom of God. But that same reality goes for so many that we come in contact with. And that's why it's so important that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, are doing our part.

That we are being the hands and feet of Jesus. As I mentioned, Jesus was here. He was teaching. He was preaching. He was reaching out to those. He was healing the sick. He was doing these miraculous things.

And so, therefore, he was leading the multitudes to him. Well, Jesus isn't here actively right now. His Spirit, we have the Holy Spirit that dwells within each one of us. But now we are to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ.

[25 : 02] And I'll be honest with you. If you ever question the power of the Holy Spirit, I mean, I think you can probably look at this morning as an example, right? How did I know that Nate wanted to move up his children's thing a week and it was about dandelions?

He didn't know that I was preaching on the parable of the weeds. I didn't even know I was preaching on that until Friday night, right? That's the reality of the situation is that the Spirit can work in ways that we don't fathom, that we don't understand.

And he puts it all together for his kingdom's sake and for his glory. Not so that we can be praised or so that we can be lifted up, but that he can. And so it's important that each one of us are doing our part, whether that's being the hands of Christ.

And we can even look at something like compassion this morning. You know, we get the opportunity here to make a monthly gift, a monthly offering to an organization that is actively being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, who is not only taking care of physical needs, but is also taking care of spiritual needs.

We don't have the opportunity to go do that ourselves, right? I've been overseas. I've been to Honduras before. A wonderful experience. It's an experience that will probably remain with me for the rest of my life.

[26 : 15] But I can't physically do that all of the time, right? I have responsibilities here. The same goes for each one of us. But there are people who God has called to be the missionaries in these far-off lands, and we get to participate in that.

And so whatever our part is, it's just important that we are being faithful, whether that's being faithful to calling out to Jesus Christ for the first time, to welcome Him into our lives, to apologize for the many things that we have done, and turn our life over to Him, or whether it's just continuing to be faithful to Him and His leading.

We get the opportunity each day to participate in the kingdom of God here on this earth. And so as we close this morning, I just hope that you will kind of take into account the truth of some of these scriptures that we've looked at, not only in the fact that we don't know what tomorrow is going to bring, but also if there are things that maybe we've been putting off, maybe conversations we've been needing to have, maybe apologies that need to be said, whatever it might be, right?

There's turmoil from the past, maybe a situation with a family member, a co-worker, whatever it might be. Understand that you aren't promised tomorrow, and so don't ever have regrets.

Instead, you know, take the opportunity to have that conversation, or if it's about scripture, then talk about scripture, and talk about leading someone to God.

[27 : 44] But if it's about, you know, just clearing up some bad relationships from our past, you know, family, as we all know, can be messy at times. Things can be said and things can be done that aren't really what we mean.

But until someone steps out and takes the initiative, then there can be a wedge that exists there for many, many years to go. And so, you know, don't allow those things to fester or to continue, but instead, you know, take care of them today.

But the same thing goes for us in our walk with Jesus Christ. If there's a divide between us and God right now, if there's a way that we've been failing, if there's something that has, you know, come into our lives that is allowing us to stumble and preventing us from being exactly who God desires us to be, it's also important that we take care of that.

And so as we close this morning, if there's anything that you need to give over to God, now would be a wonderful time to go to Him in prayer. In just a moment, the altar will obviously be open. And if you need to, you can come and pray and turn things over to the Lord.

You can talk to Him and just, you know, connect with Him. If you need someone to pray with you, I'm sure there'd be plenty of people willing to do so. You know, I would for sure. But let's close in prayer this morning.

[29 : 01] Lord, we praise You for this day. We praise You for the opportunity to come here and to open Your Word. Lord, we praise You for the truth of the Scripture today.

We thank You for parables that have come, been delivered not only to those that day, but also have been recorded that we can look at and study here today as well.

We thank You that the truth is that You desire a relationship with each one of us. And so we thank You for those of us who have a relationship with You.

We thank You that our eternity is secured in You, that we don't have to worry about what tomorrow will bring, because we know that You hold it, that You are in control of it. We pray, Lord, that You would just use us for Your kingdom's sake, that You would use us to be Your hands and feet this day.

We pray that You would just allow us to accomplish Your purpose, Lord. We pray, Lord, that You would put people into our lives that are in need of You. Maybe they're in need of You for the first time in the sense of You bringing healing and bringing redemption into their lives, Lord.

[30 : 11] Maybe there's someone who knows You. You know them, Lord, but they've become distant from You, who maybe life has gotten in the way, who difficulties have come to and for whatever reason has created a wedge between You and them, or maybe even in our own lives, Lord.

We pray that You would just allow us to be Your hands and feet in those situations. Lord, put them on our hearts, put them on our minds. Allow us to just contemplate those and then be faithful to You through prayer and then actively being obedient to what You desire for each one of us, so that You can see Your kingdom grow, Lord.

Lord, the great thing is that while these weeds, they're destined from the moment to always be weeds, that is not the case for us, that we get the choice throughout this life to change from being a bad weed to being the good fruit, Lord.

So, Lord, I pray that each one of us, whether it's in our own lives or the lives of others, that we would be just brought into this relationship with You, that we would be able to see the kingdom grow, that the kingdom of heaven would be full, Lord, that the angels would rejoice of not the work that we've done, but the work that Spirit has done through us.

So, Lord, we pray that You would continue to bless this service. Use it for Your kingdom's sake and for Your glory. Use us to be Your examples. Use us to be Your hands and feet, Lord, in this place, but also in this community.

[31 : 43] We ask it all in Your name and all God's people said, Amen. I want to reread James 4, verse 14 once more. It says, Why you don't even know what will happen tomorrow.

What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. You see, my hope and my prayer is that you have all chosen to follow Jesus, that you've put your faith and your trust in Him.

But the reality of the situation is that we choose to follow Jesus every day. And so that is my hope for each one of us. No matter how many days we have, no matter how many years we have remaining on this earth, before our eternity continues, because it doesn't begin when we take our

final breath.

It's already begun. But the reality is that we get to choose Jesus once more. And so it's my hope and my prayer for each one of you as we go throughout this week ahead, that we will choose Jesus in all that we do, in all that we say, and the things that we do with our hands, the places that our feet lead us, that they would all be pleasing to the Lord and Savior.

Let's pray as we close. Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you once again for this time. We thank you that you've given us the opportunity, the choice, Lord, to serve you, to follow you. We pray that we would be your hands and feet in this world, that we would be the light in the darkness, Lord.

[33 : 05] We pray, Lord, that you would be glorified, that you would be pleased with us, that in everything that we do, that you would just look at us and be thankful for what your servant is doing. So, Lord, we pray that you would just go before us, that you would guide us through this week, that you would give us protection as we go, whether that's to our jobs, whether that's to lunch here in a moment, whether that's to school, whatever it is, Lord.

Lord, wherever we are, wherever we go, we pray that your spirit would go before us, that you would protect us, that you would guide us, that you would give us the words to say to others, that you would close our mouth when we need it closed, and that you would open our ears when we need to listen.

Lord, we pray that you would open our eyes and allow us to see what you desire us to see, so that you can be glorified, so that you can be lifted high. Lord, we pray that you would just use us to be your servants this day.

We just ask it all in your name and all God's people said, amen.