

Matthew Ch13v24-52 - Kingdom Growth

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[0 : 0 0] so Matthew 13 we're going to pick it up in verse 24 and we're going to read down to verse 43 so last week you remember we looked at the parable of the sower this week we're going to look at a few more parables together let's read from verse 24 here hear God's word Jesus told them another parable the kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field but while everyone was sleeping his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away when the wheat sprouted and formed ears then the weeds also appeared 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 an enemy did this he replied the servants asked him do you want us to go and pull them up no he answered because while you are pulling up the weeds you may uproot the wheat with them 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 and then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn he told them another parable the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and planted in his field though it is the smallest of all seeds yet when it grows it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree so that the birds come and perch in its branches he told them still another parable the kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about 30 kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables he did not say anything to them without using a parable so was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet I will open my mouth in parables I will utter hidden things since the creation of the world 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 Jesus answered the one who sowed the good seed is the son of man the field is the world and the good seed stands 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 angels as the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire so it will be at 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 and all who do evil they will throw them into the 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 well let's pray together as we look at this passage together father would you enable us to hear your voice to us today through your word and by your holy spirit that you would give us understanding not just intellectually or mentally with our minds but that we would truly understand with our hearts so that what we hear changes us and helps us to follow you as we should so speak to us and encourage us today

Amen well Matthew's message has been very clear all the way through his gospel Jesus is God's promised king with absolute power and supreme authority and he's come to establish an eternal kingdom you remember back in chapters 8 and 9 we were given a preview a picture of what this kingdom will be like as Jesus forgives sins heals the sick and defeats Satan Jesus is the longed for king who has come to restore this disordered world and redeem our broken lives he's come to undo the effects of sin and a world under God's judgment but despite all these promotional fireworks and this introduction to Jesus it all seems to have fizzled out not much is happening not many of the crowds are repenting and following Jesus in fact there seems to be great opposition to the kingdom in chapter 10

Jesus warned his disciples you can follow on screen I am sending you out like sheep among wolves you will be handed over and flogged and then in chapter 12 we read that the Pharisees the religious people went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus what's happened the kingdom and we can ask the same question ourselves the world the world doesn't seem to be getting any better does it we're staggering out of a global pandemic and we're on the verge of entering into a global war and

in the middle of all of this opposition and persecution against the church is increasing living as a Christian today is not getting easier it's getting harder so what's happened to the kingdom well we need to be able to listen to the king look at verse 24

Jesus told them another parable in fact Jesus will go on to tell six more parables all the way through to the end of chapter 13 a parable is a practical story to highlight a spiritual reality a practical story to highlight a spiritual reality so Jesus uses these parables to teach about the kingdom of heaven so again look at verse 24 Jesus told them another parable the kingdom of heaven is like verse 31 he told them another parable the kingdom of heaven is like and in verse 33 he told them still another parable the kingdom of heaven is like you see he uses these parables to reveal to us what is going on behind the scenes we can turn on the television and listen to the news we can read what the political and social commentators are saying to get their perspective to get their understanding of what's going on in the world but Jesus uses these parables to uncover to us to reveal to us what is going on from God's perspective it's like he's opening up a big curtain and pulling it across and saying look come and see and I will show you what is going on

[9 : 14] Matthew gives us an example verse 34 Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables he didn't say anything to them without using a parable so was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet I will open my mouth in parables I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world he says I will reveal to you what is really going on I'm going to take you behind the scenes and show you God's eternal plan for his kingdom a plan that's been in place since the creation or before the creation of the world what we are going to see this morning you will not hear on your television and you will not read Indian newspaper we're going to see three things about

God's kingdom in the world today very simple the struggle the surprise and the separation the struggle the surprise and the separation first the struggle in the kingdom verse 24 Jesus told them another parable the kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field but while everyone was sleeping his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away when the wheat sprouted and formed ears then the weeds also appeared now it's very clear isn't it there's two sowers and there's two crops there's two kinds of seed one that produces wheat and another one that produces weeds and

Jesus interprets the meaning for us verse 37 the one who sowed the good seed is the son of man the field is the world and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom the weeds are the people of the evil one and the enemy who sows them is the devil now while there are two sowers there is only one owner of the field one ruler Jesus and the devil are not equal forces or powers who are fighting it out and we're waiting anxiously to see who's going to win no the field the world all belongs to Jesus he made it and he rules over all things we're told in verse 37 that he is the son of man now the son of man isn't just a different way of talking about

Jesus it's a title and it comes packed full with meaning it comes from Daniel chapter 7 so in your Bibles if you turn backwards to Daniel chapter 7 chapter 7 I haven't got a page number so if anybody does I can call it out Daniel chapter 7 so the sower of the seed is called the son of man why would Jesus refer to himself as the son of man well here in Daniel chapter 7 verse 13 we have the answer he has a vision he says in my vision at night I looked and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven he approached the ancient of days that is he is coming before

God and was led into God's presence he that is the son of man was given authority glory and sovereign power all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him his dominion his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and it will not pass away and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed let's go back to Matthew 13 so you see Jesus claims this title for himself he's saying I am the promised son of man make no mistake Jesus is God's king with absolute power and supreme authority he rules over all the nations and over every leader he has authority over every spiritual power he's the ruler of the world it's his field his kingdom now while we have a ruler of the world we would be foolish to dismiss the fact that there is an enemy in the world the devil loves nothing more than to disrupt and destroy

[14 : 44] God's kingdom you see what's going on here are two things are happening simultaneously we have the good seed the word about Jesus and his kingdom is being proclaimed the good seed is being planted people hear the word and in response people repent and believe so in verse 38 we read that the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom they hear it and they believe on the other hand we have lies about Jesus and his kingdom that are being proclaimed

people hear this twisted truth and rebel and push against Jesus as king end of verse 38 the weeds are the people of the evil one and the enemy who sows them is the devil so simultaneously all at the same time we have on the one hand the work of God going on and at the same time the work of the devil going on side by side at the one time people are being rescued into the kingdom and people remain in the kingdom of darkness and the world and the world of the devil are taking effect that's why we experience both peace and war wickedness and justice good and evil and it's what we see right now in the region of Ukraine terrible violence mindless war destruction and death the seeds of the devil has taken root in people's life and they're in living a very disordered and a corrupt way chaos and disorder reign suffering and pain are the fruit of the devil's work yet at the same time we hear of great sacrifice and service don't we there are churches and Christian communities in the surrounding regions in Poland and Moldova

Romania and Slovakia taking in hundreds and thousands of refugees feeding providing caring as they open up their homes as they open up their church buildings to be places of refuge and rest the good seed of Jesus has taken root in people's lives and they are displaying love and peace compassion and kindness this is the fruit of the work of the son of man side by side in the same field wheat and weeds grow together it's why in the region of Donetsk and Lusatia where the war has been raging since 2014 3,000 people have lost their lives but multiple people are coming to faith in Jesus there are towns and villages in that region that lie empty but in that same area on the border there have been eight new churches planted in recent years that are being filled of course the question we're all asking is well if

Jesus is the king and he's the one with absolute power and supreme authority why doesn't he intervene right now and end what's going on why does there have to be wheat and weeds growing at the same time well go back to verse 27 and we will see the answer to that question the owner servant came to Jesus and said sir didn't you sow good seed in your field where then did the weeds come from an enemy did this he replied the servants asked him do you want us to go and pull them up no he answered because while you are pulling up the weeds you may uproot the wheat with them let both grow together until the harvest at that time I will tell the harvesters first collect the weeds tie them in bundles to be burned then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn as we'll see shortly

Jesus the king is going to return but until then wheat and weeds grow together the gospel seed will be sown and people throughout the world and throughout the land of Ukraine will enter the kingdom of heaven but don't forget there's an enemy in the world who will not give up the fight he's spreading his lies with devastating results and until Jesus returns the kingdom of heaven will be struggling with the kingdom of darkness so what's going on in our world what's happening behind the scenes there's a struggle between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of darkness but second there's the surprise of the kingdom while there's an enemy at work sowing seeds of destruction and chaos we need to know that

Jesus is the sovereign ruler and that nothing and no one can hold back the kingdom of heaven God is at work and the kingdom is advancing in surprising ways first small beginnings but surprising growth let's move on to verse 31 he told them another parable the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and planted in his field though it is the smallest of all seeds you know mustard seed is tiny tiny tiny yet when it grows it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree so that the birds come and perch in its branches now what a brilliant picture of the kingdom a small beginning but surprising growth now think about that for a minute just think of how [21 : 43] Matthew introduces us to Jesus and his kingdom how does Matthew's gospel start with a genealogy of Jesus his family history it reads like a rogues gallery it's full of liars deceivers murderers outsiders pagans not the kind of start to a kingdom that gives you confidence and then we're told that Jesus is born to an unknown teenage girl in an animal shed in a backward town called Bethlehem not very promising is it then this young Jesus has to flee to Egypt to escape the murdering threats of Herod Jesus begins life as a homeless refugee doesn't sound very hopeful does it think of some of the scenes of a little child in

Ukraine coming off a bus into a new land with just a few clothes in a bag would you look at that child and say they're the hope of the world well in a sense when Jesus was taken to Egypt as a homeless refugee there in that little child was God's hope for the world that's what the kingdom of heaven is like it has small beginning but look at the kingdom today it's full of people from all over the world who heard the good news about Jesus repented and followed him verse 32 it is like the

smallest of all seeds yet when it grows is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree so that birds come and perch in its branches just as the birds find a home in the tree so countless believers are going to find their home in the kingdom of heaven you see despite the struggle there is surprising growth but there's another surprise insignificant people yet surprisingly effective look at the parable in verse 33 he told them still another parable the kingdom of heaven he said is like yeast you know you take a tiny little bit of yeast a little bit of dough that the woman took and mixed it into about 30 kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough again it's a thrilling and exciting picture of the kingdom it starts insignificant but yet is surprisingly effective as

Jesus begins his ministry all he can seem to muster together is twelve disciples none of them are very prominent none of them are well educated none of them are influential in fact as time goes on we see they're made up of deniers and betrayers when push comes to shove they all run a mile yet follow the story of these disciples as they went about their work proclaiming the gospel thousands believed and churches were planted just as an insignificant amount of yeast that tiny little bit gets mixed in and through all the dough and so it rises and takes effect so these insignificant disciples are surprisingly effective and the kingdom growth doesn't stop there today there are millions of followers thousands of churches across every continent in every nation and we in this room small as we are today in number are a living reminder that we are part of a surprising kingdom now this should encourage us yes the work is small yes we may feel insignificant but that's how the kingdom of heaven is we faithfully sow the gospel seed so people come to faith and the church grows some of you know the history and the story of this church it began with a few people praying in Cork City for a church to start in this town then it widened to a children's club in a ladies home in her front room and then it expanded to a Bible study and then to a church the kingdom may struggle we may seem insignificant we may think nothing is going on and nothing is happening but there is always a surprising and effective growth what's going on in the world what's happening in God's kingdom right across the world today there are hundreds of gatherings just like this meeting together because of the surprising work of God's kingdom so there's a struggle there's a surprise and then there's the separation from the kingdom as the kingdom grows there will be opposition but in the end there's going to be a final separation let's pick it up in verse 39 the end of verse 39 the harvest is the end of the age and the harvesters are angels as the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire so it will be at the end of the age despite the work of the devil

Jesus the son of man is going to bring about his final judgment when he will separate those who are in the kingdom from those who are not of the kingdom it's a picture of the final judgment verse 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 there will be no escape and no hiding all those who reject king Jesus and his kingdom will be separated out those who have refused to bow to his authority will be dealt with the weeds will be pulled up they will be gathered together you see the kingdom of heaven may face opposition and rejection today people may laugh at the church they may ridicule the name of Christ but when the king comes with all power and all authority all those who followed the lies of the devil will be removed once and for all verse 32 they will be thrown they will throw them into the blazing furnace and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth it's a terrifying picture of hell you see separation from the kingdom of heaven is separation from

[30 : 12] God and all his good and beautiful gifts it's an eternity without love without joy without friendship peace it's a place of perpetual lies deceit and chaos and disorder it's life without God you see the king will have the last day he is waiting patiently but he rules with absolute authority and he will separate out the weeds but second the righteous will be gathered verse 43 then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father just as there will be a terrifying separation there's going to be a glorious celebration the people of the kingdom will be gathered together into

God's eternal kingdom kingdom this is what is going to happen this is what Jesus is revealing to us and who is going to be there in God's eternal kingdom look at verse 33 the righteous not those who've earned their way in but those who've obeyed the command to repent and turn to Jesus who say I haven't got a righteousness of my own I haven't got right standing before God I need it they surrendered and submitted their life to King Jesus no longer are they building their own earthly empires and their own little kingdoms they now live to seek first the kingdom of God they serve the kingdom of Jesus above all else so picture it in your mind right now picture the scene as the king comes it will be glorious it will be like the rising of the sun a thrilling and captivating beauty as the light dispels the darkness once and for all

Jesus will come and he will gather in the wheat and they will share in his joy forever no more wars no more pandemics no more suffering and no more tears sheer delight amazing wonder home at last you see Jesus has already come once hasn't he he came as the king to save he went to the cross to die for you and me he took the judgment that we all deserve and he suffered the hell that I deserve for me but one day the king is going to come again for a final time and he will come as king to judge look at the end of verse 43 whoever has ears let them hear do you hear what Jesus is saying to us he has taken us behind the scenes he has pulled back the curtain and helped us know what is going on in the world and in his kingdom something the news will never ever tell you but here he says there is a struggle it will be difficult it will be hard but keep going your work will count the kingdom is growing and it will continue to grow and one day the king will come again and there will be a separation will you trust his word will you believe what he is doing in the world today have the eyes of faith to see behind what is going on in the kingdom let's pray later on in Matthew's gospel chapter 25 we read these words just listen and reflect for a moment picture the scene when the son of man comes in all his glory and all the angels with him he will sit on his glorious throne all the nations Ireland Russia Ukraine all the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the people one from another father thank you that we do have a hope in the lord Jesus Christ a hope that is beyond any military action or any diplomatic reasoning there is a hope for the broken for the refugee the suffering and the hurting there is a hope for those who are rebellious and who are willing to repent and turn and bow to King Jesus there is a kingdom an eternal kingdom with a glorious king who has all things and all peoples in his hands who is coming again and will put everything right help us to look in faith and trust you help us to live our lives with this eternal kingdom in view knowing that you are good and you are great in Jesus name amen so we're going to sing together and none of us deserve it and secured it for us through his death on his promise so we can look forward in anticipation and complete assurance but when Jesus turns [37 : 28] Thank you.