

Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

Sermon Title: It's Either Eternal Honor or Eternal Horror. There is no Middle Ground for Ignoring the King of Kings.

September 1, 2019

Today's Scripture: See insert

Series Theme verse: Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)

Introduction: Got a haircut on Thursday and heard terrible things about supposed Christians who lie cheat and steal and go to Bible study every Monday Wednesday and Friday. One that was mentioned I know very, very well. Then I went to Liferight and hired some men and heard more terrible things about dishonest Christian businessman in town. I am glad, except for one case, I did not hear any names but the people sharing were obviously upset that these supposed Christians were acting very much like non-Christians. If I had entered into their conversation and not stopped it politely, I could have easily made determinations in my own mind based on what I had heard whether these individuals were true or false believers. This parable tells me not to do exactly that. It is not for me to decide.

Main point: Let God (using His angels) determine who is and who is not a genuine believer. We are to refrain from casting judgments about who is and who isn't saved.

Why is this so important? Because we can end up devouring one another and Satan wins. That seems to be the point when Jesus says if you pull up the darnel you will also pull up the wheat. Roots get intertwined. If church members start telling people they think are not Christians that they are not Christians, the damage can be huge. First of all they may not be true believers at the moment but will be later. Secondly, they may be new believers whose lives look similar to non-believers because the HS usually works on one thing at a time. Thirdly, if they hear they are not they may get totally discouraged and begin to think that salvation is based on works something Satan wants them to believe. If so, they may pursue self-righteousness or give up altogether knowing that it is hopeless to live a perfect life.

Context:

Exegesis:

1. It is God through Christ who makes people become Christians (by being born again). *The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.*

- Every time we witness, we are being used by Jesus to spread His seed. Like the sower in the first parable, we spread it randomly. But Jesus knows those who are his and when we share the gospel to someone who is already chosen, Jesus through the power of the Spirit will guarantee it will take root. *John 10:26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. (ESV)*
 - The seed is also the person in the sense that God has used His word to bring about a regenerate heart that produced repentance. It was the word that made that happen. Isaiah 55 and *Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (ESV)*
 - Jesus calls it the “good seed”. In other words the gospel brings life. Satan’s lies bring death, here and later.
2. The Kingdom of Heaven encompasses this world (earth and by extension the universe). *The field is the world*, This planet is where the saints of God will reside forever. *2 Peter 3:13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (ESV)* Don’t imagine heaven being far away. Every rock and tree belongs to the Master. Every human belongs to him.
 3. The seed Satan uses to keep people enslaved is his use of lies. *The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (ESV) Genesis 3:4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. (ESV)*
 - The weed seed was most likely a bearded darnel that looks very much like wheat but is actually poisonous. Because it is so similar to wheat (the good seed) Jesus implies that it is often hard to tell who is a true and false believer by outward appearances.
 - Satan’s most effective lie (seed) is to tell people they are saved by their good works. To the disciples, the Pharisees must have looked like the ultimate good person, but they were sons of the devil.
 - Today, some of the most evil people are wearing fancy robes and preach from behind pulpits. The Catholic church bishops and popes have much to answer to God on Judgment Day for their knowingly allowing pedophilia to occur on their watch. Protestant Church is also not immune to hypocrites in the pulpit.
 4. Jesus hints that the amount of time between His ascension and the end of the age when He returns is long, not short. *Matthew 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”” (ESV)*
 - For a farmer waiting for a cash crop to mature, 5 months seems like a long, long time. 250 days for winter wheat and 150 days for spring wheat. It has almost been 2,000 years since the death of Christ.

- Therefore, we cannot lose hope because we think he is late in rescuing his church. There is much more seed planting to do between now and then.
5. God's angels are tasked with separating the righteous from the ungodly. *The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Matthew 13:49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous (ESV)*
 - They cannot judge what's in men's hearts so obviously they have a list the Father gave them. It's too late then to change your mind. Angels are powerful creatures who are fully capable to usher people to their final destination. When does this happen? I think the first harvest is towards the end of the Tribulation right before the wrath of God which comes with the 7 bowl judgments. Then the next one happens at the end of the millennium.
 - Jesus seems to single out a unique group of ungodly when he calls them people who cause other to sin and law-breakers. *and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, Matthew 18:7 "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! (ESV)*
 6. Jesus' description of hell tells us of an unthinkable eternal horror. *and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*
 - This matches John's description - *Revelation 19:20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. (ESV) Revelation 20:10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (ESV)*
 - Is the fire figurative? It has to be worse than the kind of fire we are familiar with. It is excruciatingly painful but will never consume a body. So Jesus is trying to instruct us as to what kind of pain is coming. The worst he can think of is the pain of burns from a fire. But this is worse.
 7. Jesus' description of the eternal reward for the godly is unimaginable glory. *Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (ESV)*
 - This has to mean that the greater the godliness, the greater the brilliance emanating from that person's face. This is more than chevrons or symbols people will wear, this is literally a brilliance of light. If Jesus' description of hell is to be believed, and there is real pain and degrees of it, then we must conclude that this is real as well. *Daniel 12:3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (ESV)*

Application

Which one are you? Darnel (tare) or wheat? You will know by looking at your desires. Do you love Jesus and want to be closer to him? Do you hate your sin and want to live in righteousness? Do you feel

the convicting power of the HS prompting you to repent? These are signs of a true believer. If you don't have them, and these signs are missing, these are signs of an unbeliever.