



THE COMPASS

RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Compass:
Encounter-Examine-Explore-Embrace God's Word
On
Your Discipleship Path

Sermon Series: "Parables."
(Pentecost, 2026)
"Enduring." Text: *Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43.*

☐ **Day #1—Monday, July 20th. Read: Matthew 13.24-30. –Encounter: God's Word and your life—What do you Hear and/or See?**

A characteristic of God's rule is His patience. Good and evil will exist together in this world until the day that God judges the world and sets the world right. Until that day, the church is to continue its work of combating the evil in this world through proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all.

This week, we will examine another one of Jesus' parables that involves an agricultural image. Recall that the Greek word for parable, *parabole*, means to literally, "throw together" or "alongside." Jesus takes circumstances, objects, or persons, some concrete examples from His times, and "throws alongside" a truth about God and/or God's relationship with humanity.

These parables in Matthew have been referred to as the "Parables of the Kingdom." This is because, first and foremost, Jesus Himself introduces these parables with, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." The kingdom of heaven is the same reality as the Kingdom of God. Matthew, an observant Jew, will not use God's name in a common manner, so he refers to the *realm* where God rules. However, the focus is still on God and His rule. Both the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven" refer to God's reign in the world and particularly, His reign in human hearts. God's kingdom and reign is anywhere that God's will is done.

In this second "farming" parable, Jesus again uses the figure of a sower, but with a different twist. After a farmer sowed his wheat seed, an enemy came at night and sowed *weeds* in the same soil. As a result, the wheat and the weeds grew together and would continue to do so until the time of harvest, for removing the weeds early would result in destroying the wheat. Therefore, they must grow together until the harvest when the weeds would first be gathered out and destroyed, then the wheat would be gathered into the barn. This story would be very understandable to Jesus' audience as it was common for enemies to contaminate a farmer's crop. Through this parable, Jesus will explain the question of the existence of evil in God's created, good world.

Theologian Matthew Henry believes that Jesus uses parables because some people would not understand the kingdom of God is any other way. As Henry describes...

The manner of Christ's preaching; he preached by parables; wise sayings, but figurative, and which help to engage attention and a diligent search. Solomon's sententious dictates, which are full of similitudes, are called *proverbs*, or *parables*; it is the same word; but in this, as in other things, *Behold a greater than Solomon is here, in whom are hid treasures of wisdom.*¹

Through this parable, Jesus will reveal truths about God and God's relationship with a fallen world. What Jesus desired most of all was that His hearers would *accept* and *live* in the kingdom of heaven that was now *present in Him!*

Consider/Reflect: How much authority does God have in your life? What would need to change for God to "reign" in your life? How does it make you feel to know that Jesus will find ANY way to communicate and get through to you?

¹ M. Henry. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Hendrickson, 1994).

□ **Day #2—Tuesday, July 21st. Read: Again: Matthew 13.24-30. —Examine: The Text and its Message.**

The seeds that produced the weeds, or in other translations, “tares,” was likely *darnel* (the Greek word is “*zizania*”). Darnel was a kind of weedy rye grass that in its early stages so closely resembled wheat, that it was impossible to distinguish them. It was also slightly poisonous. The roots of the darnel and the wheat would become intertwined in the early stages of growth. Consequently, to pull out the weeds would threaten the wheat. When full grown, the wheat and weeds could be distinguished and then the weeds could be removed before harvest.

Comparing last week’s parable with this parable, we can understand that Satan opposes the kingdom by trying to snatch the Word from human hearts (last week’s parable, *Matthew 13:4, 19*). However, when that fails, he has other ways of attacking God’s work. In addition, as we saw last week, the birds in the Parable of the Sower represented Satan (*Matthew 13.19*). Here, as well, the enemy that sowed the weeds is the devil; he is an enemy to the “field” that is this world, which he tries to poison (remember, the weeds (darnel) was also poisonous). The devil does this by “planting” his “seeds” in the world: those that will follow the devil, either consciously or unconsciously. Again, I turn to Matthew Henry who describes the devil’s “seed:”

Here is the character of sinners, hypocrites, and all profane and wicked people...They are the children of the devil, as a wicked one. Though they do not own his name, yet they bear his image, do his lusts, and from him they have their education; he rules over them, he works in them, Eph. 2:2; Jn. 8:44...They are tares in the field of this world; they do no good, they do hurt; unprofitable in themselves, and hurtful to *the good seed*, both by temptation and persecution: they are weeds in the garden, have the same rain, and sunshine, and soil, with the good plants, but are good for nothing: the *tares are among the wheat*. Note, God has so ordered it, that good and bad should be mixed together in this world, that the good may be exercised, the bad left inexcusable, and a difference made between earth and heaven.

Consider/Reflect: Does this parable answer any questions you may have about the state of this world? Your life? What does this parable tell you about God? About the devil?

□ **Day #3—Wednesday, July 22nd. Read: Matthew 13.36-39. —Explore: The background to this text(s).**

Leaving the crowds, Jesus goes to an unnamed house, likely to continue teaching just His disciples. Here, the disciples asked for an explanation of this “wheat and weeds” parable. In summary, Jesus tells us...:

- The man is Christ (*v. 37*).
- The *seed* is *believers*, children of the kingdom (*v. 38*).
- The *field* is the *world* (*v. 38*).
- The *enemy* is *Satan* (*v. 39*).
- The *weeds* are the *children of the devil* (*v. 38*).
- The *reapers* are *angels* (*v. 39*).
- The *harvest* is the *end of the age* (*v. 39*).

Wherever Christ “plants” true believers to bear fruit for His glory (the “good soil” from last week’s parable), Satan plants enemies of the Christian faith who oppose the work and hinder the harvest. Warren Wiersbe provides a fascinating analysis of the “two seeds” image given by Jesus in this parable:

The Two “Seeds” in the Bible:

Genesis 3:15:

“This is the first mention of the ‘two seeds’ in the Bible. God said that the woman would have a seed (Christ) (Gal. 3:16; 4:4), and the serpent (Satan) would have a seed. It also states that there would be constant enmity between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s seed.

Cain and Abel:

When Cain murdered Abel (Gen. 4:1–16) he started this enmity between the two seeds. First John 3:12 states that Cain was “of that wicked one”—a child of the devil! This conflict continues throughout the entire OT.

The Pharisees and Jesus:

Satan’s seed (“children of the devil”) opposed John the Baptist (3:7) and did nothing when he was killed by Herod. They opposed Christ (12:34; 23:33) and asked to have Him crucified. At the cross, Satan bruised Christ’s heel but Christ bruised Satan’s head and defeated him forever.

The final result:

This enmity between the “two seeds” will finally culminate in a false Christ (2 Thes. 2). The ‘son of perdition’ will oppose the Son of God; the ‘mystery of lawlessness’ will oppose the mystery of godliness. The harlot religious system (Rev. 17) will fight the bride (the true church), and there will be a satanic trinity—the devil, the beast, the false prophet (Rev. 19:20; 20:1–3)—to oppose the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the end, all satanic forces will be defeated by the Son of God.”²

Consider/Reflect: Why do you think the disciples were so puzzled by this parable? Where you do face conflict in your life? Pray about that today.

□ **Day #4--Thursday, July 23rd. Read Again: Matthew 13.36-39.— Explore: The background to this text(s).**

In this parable, Jesus is very clear that we should understand that we are in a spiritual battle in this life. In fact, Satan opposes the work of God in several ways. First, as we learned in last week’s parable of the seed and soil, the devil snatches the Word of God from hearts, chokes the seed/Word with divided loves, and/or threatens the heart with persecution. In addition to trying to overcome the Word, the devil plants his sown “seed” (“children of the devil”) wherever the Lord plants true believers.

Children of God and children of the devil will grow together until the end of the world; then God will separate them. While the church will never eradicate all evil and create a perfect world this side of heaven—that is God’s job—we have been given the task by Jesus to love our enemies and combat the powers of the devil in this world. The church is to fight the devil and his “seed” through loving and serving those in need, and bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through our lives.

Another important point: when Jesus says we should allow the bad seed to grow together, this does not mean that there should be no law or consequences to sin. God commands the use of civil authority to control evil. God also commands the church to judge sin and discipline Christians who would hinder the growth of the church by godless living (*1 Corinthians 5* and *Matthew 18.15–18*). We must “try the spirits” to detect when Satan is at work (*1 John 4.1–6*). Commentator M. Eugene Boring makes this point:

When the master in the parable forbids the servant to go and weed out the field, this is not to be interpreted as a call to passivity in the face of evil. It is not a divine command to ignore injustice in the world, violence in society, or wrong in the church. It is, rather, a realistic reminder that the servants do not finally have the ability to get rid of all the weeds and that sometimes attempts to pluck up weeds cause more harm than good. This is the way it is. Are we lost forever, then, in a hopelessly compromised world? No, the parable contains the promise that, in the wisdom of God, the weeds will ultimately be destroyed. Evil is temporary...³

Again, our responsibility as Christians is to “plant” the Word in our hearts and let God “plant” us in places where we can bear fruit for His glory.

Consider/Reflect: “The master does not seem overly upset by what his enemy has done and shows great patience in delaying until the harvest the separation of weeds from wheat. He warns his servants not to judge prematurely by assuming they can distinguish between these plants. A mark of God’s rule is His patience (2Pt 3:8–15). For us sinners, this is a great comfort and also an encouragement for us to endure evil patiently (2Tm 2:24).”⁴

□ **Day #5— Friday, July 24th. Read: Matthew 13.40-43.—Explore: The background to this text(s).**

Judgment day. The word evokes fear even among Christians! Through this parable, we hear that one day, God will gather all those who have done evil and refused to accept His salvation, judging them accordingly. While the weeds were burned (burning and fire are common metaphors for God’s judgment), likewise those that reject the Gospel will be judged. Make no mistake: there will be a judgment. Jesus describes it as a time when there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew frequently mentions this reaction to describe the horrible reality of judgment (*Matthew 8.12; 13.42, 50; 22.13; 24.51; 25.30*; Luke mentioned it once *Luke 13.28*). Each time this phrase is used, it refers to judgment on sinners. “Weeping” suggests sorrow and grief (emotional agony of the lost in hell), and grinding of one’s teeth speaks of anger and pain.

Conversely, on the Day of Judgment, the children of the kingdom, or the righteous, “will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (*Matthew 13.43; Daniel 12.3*). Note that Jesus says it will be the righteous that will shine. I mentioned on Sunday that

2 W.W. Wiersbe. *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Victor Books, 1992).

3 *The New Interpreter’s Bible: Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

4 *The Lutheran Study Bible* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

one of the core theological truths of the gospel is that through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we are *imputed* with Jesus' righteousness. Jesus took our sin and exchanges it with His righteousness. Luther calls this the "happy exchange." We need not fear the judgment because Jesus has been judged in our place!

Let us go deeper in the description that Jesus provides about the righteous in the final judgment. First, Jesus describes the location as the Kingdom of the Father; we are children of God (*1 John. 3.2*). It is our Father's house, His throne (*Revelation 3.21*). Secondly, we shall "shine like the sun." In this present world we struggle with sin, death, disease, fears, and discouragements (the "weeds"). One day, believers will...

...shine forth as the sun from behind a dark cloud; at death they shall shine forth to themselves; at the great day they will shine forth publicly before all the world, *their bodies will be made like Christ's glorious body*; they shall shine by reflection, with a light borrowed from the Fountain of light; their sanctification will be perfected, and their justification published; God will own them for his children, and will produce the record of all their services and sufferings for his name: they shall shine as the sun, the most glorious of all visible beings.⁵

What an incredible picture! This is one reason why Jesus ends this parable with, "He who has ears, let him hear!" We must not miss the truth that Jesus is telling us here. Knowing that one day the devil, his works and his ways, will be destroyed, "pulled up like weeds," encourages us to *persevere*. The parable also reminds us that while we are on earth we have work to do. The Gospel must be proclaimed and the evil one and his "seed" must be combated. Through this parable we are reminded of both our *duty* and our *joy*!

Consider/Reflect: How "shinny" do you feel today? What difference does it make to you to know that one day evil will be destroyed and all will be well? On that day, what do you look forward to the most?

□ **Day #6-Saturday, July 25th. Read: Matthew 13.36; Romans 8.18-19, 26-27.—Embrace: God and His guiding you through His Word.**

This week, we have explored, like the disciples in *13.36*, the meaning of the parable. Today, I want to focus on the need to be equipped for living among the "weeds" in this world. Until the judgment day, the good seed, God's children, and the bad seed, the devil's children, will "live together." The church exists to quip God's children, disciples of Jesus, to live faithfully in this world in the midst of evil, temptation, and sin.

As the disciples met with Jesus in a house, away from the crowds, this reminds us that we too must spend time with Jesus. We need moments of reflection, prayer, study, and worship. Sometimes this spending time with Jesus will be done in community, sometimes in private. We need both!

When we spend time with Jesus and His people, we are becoming more like Jesus and less like the culture that surrounds us. Jesus was very clear in this parable: The end of the Age represents the conclusion of the present Age. In this period between Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension, and His future return (the new Age, the judgment, the "harvest"), the King is absent but His kingdom continues. Until Jesus returns, the church will coexist side by side with evil, and we will do battle with the devil and his "seed." And...the Holy Spirit is both working in our hearts, strengthening and deepening our faith, and praying for us! This is our hope and our power!

Consider/Reflect: "At the close of this present age, the Son of Man will send His angels to gather all people. The law-breakers will suffer eternal punishment, and the righteous will enjoy the Father's heavenly glory. Since all people are law-breakers, all deserve to be cast into the fiery furnace. Only those who have faith in Christ will escape this fate. They are declared righteous (Rm 3:21–26). 'He who has ears, let him hear' (v 43). [Pray]: Bless me, Jesus, with a believing heart, that I may remain a child of Your kingdom. Amen."⁶

Pray and Prepare for Worship Tomorrow...

Sermon Series: "Parables."

Scripture Texts:

Deuteronomy 7.6-9

Romans 8.28-39

Matthew 13.44-52

⁵ Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

⁶ *The Lutheran Study Bible*.