

Matthew 13:24-30, 26-43 Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷The 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 uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let 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.’”

³⁶Then 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.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The 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. ⁴²They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

What do we do with the weeds?

1. Wheat and weeds
2. Living with the weeds
3. Look forward to the harvest

Do you have a garden? Some people who have a garden are very meticulous about keeping weeds out of the garden. They pull the weeds that might be encroaching on their beans or tomatoes. Still others don’t seem to care about the weeds at all. It’s the same with your lawn. I challenged my nephew to find a weed in my lawn. He didn’t even try. We have one house in our neighborhood that is more dandelions than grass and they only mow those when they have gone to seed. So, what do we do with the weeds? Do we pull them? Hoe them? Spray them? Or do we just ignore them because we have better things to do than worry about a few weeds. What do we do with the weeds?

Jesus told this parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. As Jesus explained, the good seed are believers. Notice only Jesus can make believers. No person ever made a believer. Preachers and missionaries can proclaim the gospel, but they can’t make one person believe. Only Jesus can do that. Yes, he uses the gospel proclaimed by people, but only he can make that gospel take root and create a believer.

“Why is there evil in the world?” people often ask. Jesus answers that in this parable. *The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sows them is the devil.* The word for weeds is a very particular word for a particular weed. It’s a weed in Palestine called the bearded darnel. In its early stages, it looks just like wheat. But when they both produce kernels, you can see the difference. The weeds look different, and its kernels are poisonous. Jesus tells us that this is what is happening in our world today. Jesus’ enemy, Satan, is planting unbelievers in the world.

There’s an old saying that says, “Where God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel next door.” So, it shouldn’t surprise us if there spring up among us many different false teachings. Satan is sowing his seed. Satan disguises himself cleverly as he assumes a pious appearance causing people to believe that he is a trustworthy spirit; yet under the guise of such slick humility and spirituality there is nothing but hellish deceit and lies.

Through false teachings and lies of all kinds Satan makes the gospel an offense in the world, turning people’s eyes, ears, and hearts away from it. For human reason asks why it should believe a teaching about which the teachers can’t agree. As a result, the doctrine of faith in Jesus is hated more than ever and denounced.

This parable is a reminder that it’s not the gospel that is the problem; the problem is our adversary, the devil, who sows his evil people in the world. Jesus also reminds us that where there is the wheat, there will be weeds. We can count on that.

So, what do we do with the weeds?

The farmer's servants had a proposal. *The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'* That seems to make sense to us, doesn't it? What do you do with weeds in your garden? You pull them or hoe them. You get rid of them so they don't squeeze water and nutrients from your plants. What do you do with weeds in your lawn? If you are like me, you spray them or pull them for the same reason. And because they look bad. I don't know of a farmer who doesn't work to keep weeds out of the corn and soybeans. So, the suggestion to pull the weeds makes sense to us.

Down through history that has made sense to a lot of people. The call went out to destroy the infidels and wrest the Holy Land from their wicked control. Thousands responded to the Crusades and many died. Then there was the Inquisition that burned many at the stake for what they believed. Some false religions still call upon their members to participate in "holy wars," and some opponents of abortion kill abortion doctors. What do we do with the weeds? For many the answer is to pull them up. Get rid of them. Eradicate the evil among us.

'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. This parable teaches us how we should conduct ourselves toward false teachers and evil people. We are not to uproot nor destroy them. Who knows when the Word of God may touch his heart? But if he is burned at the stake, or destroyed, it is thereby assured that he can never find the truth. As Luther said, "Often for the sake of one righteous man we must spare seven villains." (Martin Luther, The House Postils, Vol. 1, p. 271)

Jesus wants us to understand what his kingdom is. Christ's kingdom has nothing to do with fist and sword. God has commanded the secular government to use the sword and to root out wickedness, thieves, murderers and killers. But in Christ's kingdom there is neither sword nor rule by force. ³⁰*Let both grow together until the harvest.* "In other words, let things be as they are; you are not to set things right by using the sword; simply continue on with the Word." (Martin Luther, The House Postils, Vol. 1, p. 274)

The weeds really are not a threat to the wheat. "They cannot harm Jesus' followers. "Oh, they may shout, scream, threaten, and even make life uncomfortable and unbearable. They can tempt us to sin, but they cannot make a Christian fall into sin. In fact, standing up to sin and temptation can only produce a good effect in the Christian. It is good spiritual exercise that makes a Christian strong, and it makes the Christian depend on what is important, the Word of our Lord, Jesus Christ." (Meditations June 30, 1999)

The Lord uses the temptations the unbelievers confront us with to further a wholesome spiritual growth in us. In the midst of the struggles they bring us, we learn to despair of our own strength and to turn to the Lord. The scoffing of the unbelievers also forces us to dive into God's Word and so strengthens our faith.

So, what do we do with the weeds? Leave them alone and look forward to the harvest. *The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The 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. ⁴²They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

This is the fate of all those who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior from sin. This includes everyone who holds to the teachings of the Muslim religion, or any other religion that does not believe in Jesus as God and Savior. This includes every American who rejects the Bible and buys into all the various forms of immorality and non-Biblical lifestyles as portrayed on TV -- *everything that causes sin and all who do evil* -- will be picked up by an angel on Judgment Day and thrown into hell. Jesus describes hell here as a fiery furnace, where there is weeping and grinding of teeth. Jesus teaches us that while God allows evil to take place in our world, he does not approve, and he will show it on Judgment Day.

⁴³*Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear."* Believers, on the other hand, can look forward with anticipation to the day of judgment. No longer will they be tempted by unbelievers. No longer will evil rear its ugly head. No longer will Satan run rampant. He will be consigned to hell as will all who follow him.

But believers will shine with the righteousness that Christ earned for us by his perfect life and innocent death. What a contrast Jesus presents us. The fires of hell or shining like the sun!

This parable teaches us to repent for all those times we have let weeds influence us. The parable causes us to repent to God for all those times we have made sinful choices in our lives. The good news is that God forgives you. He forgives you because Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins. Because of Jesus God wipes out all of the sins you have done. Jesus has sown his Word in your heart and made you his wheat.

What do we do with the weeds? Leave them alone and look forward to the harvest with joy and confidence.