

REVOLUTIONARY STORIES OF JESUS

Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds

Bottom Line: We must patiently endure evil in this world, not taking matters of judgment into our own hands, but leaving it up to Christ when He returns.

Can you remember a time when you saw something being done wrongly and had to fight the urge to do it yourself? How did you handle the situation?

Maybe you've tried to teach somebody to do something, maybe you've seen something being done wrongly, or maybe you've just disagreed with the way something was being done—all of us have probably experienced frustration of seeing something being done wrongly and wanting to take matters into our own hands.

Is this kind of response a righteous response or not? Discuss.

Whether or not our desire to take over is a good response or not really depends on the situation: if we see somebody doing something dangerous, then for their safety and the safety of others, we should step in. But if we are honest, most of the time it is not concern for others that causes us to feel this way—it is pride. *We know what is best. We know how to handle the situation. We can produce better results.* This desire assumes that we are smarter or more wise than somebody else, which may very well be true, but there times when we are wrong. Similarly, Jesus warned His disciples to be wary of the temptation to try and take matters into their own hands when it came to judgment of sinners and the dispensing of justice. He taught them this lesson in the parable of the weeds and the wheat.

Read Matthew 13:24-30 and then the explanation in vv. 36-43.

According to this parable, what does Jesus tell us about our role in the Kingdom in regards to judgment? Rather than uprooting the weeds, what should we be doing instead?

In His explanation, Jesus explains that the weeds are “sons of the evil one” and the weeds are also referred to as “all causes of sin and all law-breakers.” The presence of weeds in the world tells us that there will always be evil that we must contend with. But just as the slaves were instructed not to uproot the weeds, we must remember that it is not our job to bring final judgment on nonbelievers or evildoers. Rather we are to leave judgment in the hands of God.

Read Romans 12:17-21. Considering these verses along with Jesus' warning that uprooting the weeds may lead to accidentally uprooting some wheat, why is vengeance and judgment best left up to God?

*(Note: The emphasis in this question is that God is a better judge than we are, but other questions from your group members about what it means to “accidentally uproot some wheat” may come up. Given what we **know** the Bible says about the eternal security of the believer, we know this doesn't mean that a truly saved person could lose their salvation by the way that we treat them. At the very least, we can confidently say that “uprooting wheat” entails some spiritual damage being done to somebody who is truly*

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saved, therefore we should refrain from passing final judgment upon anybody. Unless you have come across a clearer explanation of what this means, it may be best to refrain from trying to provide definite answers and let the tension that it may cause rest where it is.)

Verse 17 leaves no doubt that getting even is evil, and verse 21 says that if we take matters into our own hands, we have been overcome by evil. Therefore, judgment is best left up to God because there is no way we can dispense it and be righteous at the same time. It is possible for our judgments to be wrong, misdirected, or misplaced, but that is not the case with God. His judgments are always right and true.

How can poorly wrought judgment affect our witness to unbelievers? Conversely, how does refraining from judgment help our witness?

Read 2 Timothy 2:24-25.

Here, Paul connects our “patiently enduring evil” with the hope that “God may grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.” God can save even the most wicked and evil person. He can turn weeds into wheat. By pronouncing judgment upon evildoers, we may be speaking against someone that God plans to save. We are called to patiently endure evil in this world, to be nestled in amongst the weeds, not tearing them out, but instead working to plant more wheat. We aim for the salvation of the lost, not their judgment. We leave that in the hands of God who alone “judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23).

Why do you think Jesus wanted His disciples to be aware of the coming day of judgment that He speaks of in Matthew 13:41-43? How should this coming reality influence the way we live today?

What might it look like for you to stop trying to “pull weeds” and instead start trying to “plant wheat?” What does it look like for us as a group to do this?

Reflection:

Is it possible that in some way, you’ve embraced attitudes or behaviors that are the result of casting unjust judgment on others? Such as withholding forgiveness, physically avoiding someone, harboring bitterness towards someone, etc. Sometimes these attitudes are subtle and we can miss them.

Is there anybody in your life that you have sinfully pronounced judgment on? Meaning, is there anybody in your life that you have ceased to pray for? That you have given up on their salvation? That you have assumed is lost and there is no hope for them? Is it possible you have assumed this about entire groups of people (certain religions, political parties, ethnicities, etc.)? How does this reveal a lack of trust in God? In the work of Christ? In the power of the Gospel?

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Do you see yourself more as an instrument of God's justice? Or an instrument of His love, mercy, and forgiveness? How well do your actions line up with the answer to that question?

Do you have any anger that you try to justify by the wrongs that have been done to you? How does this reveal a lack of trust in the judgment of God?

Announcements

Constitution revisions are available for you to pick up at Connections. If you are a covenant member of FBCnl, please carefully read through the Constitution and if you should have any questions, you can submit them in one of the following ways:

- 1) Write your questions on the provided cards in the lobby and drop those cards off in the box.
- 2) Go to fbcnl.com/questions and submit your question

Be sure to include your name, as no question submitted without a name will be addressed.

On Sunday, February 11, following the evening Prayer Gathering, the Constitution team will be addressing questions that have been turned in. And on Sunday, March 4, at the quarterly Members' Meeting, members will vote to adopt the Constitution.

Curriculum is posted online at www.fbcnl.com/resources/curriculum. Here you can download the current study as well as any past studies that we have completed. Be sure to look around and find other resources on our website such as sermon recordings and Bible classes.