

## Matthew ch 13 vs. 24-43

Not everyone is going to respond to the word of God the same; that's the message of the parable of the sower. With some it will make absolutely no lasting impact whatsoever, their mind is shut to the things of God, so their hearts grow dull, and their ears grow deaf. We might say that their hearts are callused to the word of God, and the things of God. It goes in 1 ear and out the other, and we spoke last week of several reasons that that may occur, but the bottom line is that their hearts have grown hard and so even though they may listen to you in the physical sense, it makes no impact on their lives.

As a result they get ripped off, the enemy comes and *snatches* away the seed that was planted as its just sort of laying there on the surface of their hearts. That word "snatches" means snatched away violently, or removed immediately, in other words no sooner than it comes out of my mouth and hits your heart then "bam" it's gone. If you could peel back this physical realm and take a peek into the spiritual, it would blow your mind to see what's happening in this very room. And the warfare that's taking place as the enemy is ripping some of you off for this time that God has appointed, that you might experience Him and come to know Him in a personal way, or in a more intimate way. But since you'd rather think about the game later, or what's for lunch or what you'd rather be doing, or how there's something about me you don't like or would like to see change, it's taking no affect on you whatsoever.

Others of you are soaking it up, receiving it with gladness and you're all pumped up with your newfound faith and ready to take on the world, you're topped out. But there's no root in you, you lack an understanding to the height, and the width, and the depth of the love of Christ, you're not really established on the sure foundation of the word of God but rather you're on an emotional high. And that's not enough to sustain you, and so when tribulation comes or persecution comes because of the words sake you'll immediately fall. Because you expected that when you gave your heart to Christ all your problems would be over and it would be clear skies and smooth sailing from here. But the bible doesn't teach that, Jesus said no servant is above his Master, and no disciple is above his Teacher, if they persecuted your Lord, what makes you think you deserve it any better? The fact is, that contrary to popular opinion true Christianity is not the easy road, now it's easy to be religious, but that has nothing to do with Christianity, God hates religion. So when the heat is turned up on this individual they are immediately stumbled, they weren't established on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ and His word but rather a superficial emotional experience which just doesn't make the cut.

We also seen the type of individual (which again I believe is probably the most viscous and dangerous category for people in our culture and in our society.) and That's the type of person who isn't hardened to the things of God, nor are they a superficial hearer with no root in them. But they're genuinely open to and interested in the things of God and their hearts are cultivated properly to receive it. But the problem is that they're also interested in everything else this life has to offer, so consequently they become distracted from the Lord and His word and His people. They get caught up in the temporal, the here and now, vs staying focused on the eternal and what's really important and thus the word of God gets choked out of their lives and hearts, and they're rendered unfruitful.

They have all kinds of good intentions and plan to make time for God, but something always seems to come up and there's always a reason why they've neglected their relationship with the Lord. God becomes their last priority, and how sad that is; that the One who gave His all for you and made you the priority of His life, isn't even afforded the time of day in your life. And I've heard the phrase, Hell is full of Good intentions, and it's true, good intentions won't get you to heaven, only Jesus Christ will, by faith in Him and His shed blood on your behalf; make Him your priority.

Finally there is that person and those people, who will receive the word, allow it to root deeply into every aspect of their lives, and they uproot everything that has even the potential to choke out their relationship with God. and The result is a life that's set apart to God, used of God and bears fruit to His glory. Now not every body will bear the same amount of fruit, but they'll all bear fruit just the same. and I Told you last week the 6 specific areas of fruit that the bible points out that will show up in the believers life and if you weren't here, I'd encourage you to get that tape.

But God has a way of finding out and exposing those whose hearts are true towards Him vs those who are a long for the ride but not really sincere and often that comes through what we seen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> category, tribulation and persecution. The same sun that scorched and killed those plants, nourished and strengthened the others, we often refer to it as God's divine school of suffering. And it's guaranteed to expose those whose hearts are true toward God vs those aren't sincere in their relationship and commitment to God. God's molding process; and it never feels good to be carved on but there's no way to experience the power of the resurrection with out 1<sup>st</sup> experiencing the fellowship of His sufferings. Before you can know the power of the resurrection, death has to take place, you have to die to self, and that was category #3s problem, refusing to die to self but rather too self consumed. But even Jesus couldn't experience the power of the resurrection with out 1<sup>st</sup> suffering and even dying.

Paul wanted to know Jesus Christ and His experience Him so intensely that we read in Phil 3:10-11 where He wrote, *“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”* So there are many times when God allows certain things to transpire in our lives because He’s trying to bring about a further element of maturity in our lives, He’s seeking to empty us of ourselves and get our minds redirected on Him. Nothing seems to turn our hearts toward God faster than some good old fashioned suffering. When you’re at the end of you, you’ll cry out to God and that’s right where God wants us to live; at the end of us, on our faces crying out to Him. Why, because He’s cruel, no, because He loves you so He’s willing to allow temporal suffering so that you might stay focused and dependent on Him rather than straying off and finding yourself in eternal separation from Him in suffering and torment. Paul said *“we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”* So God has His reasons for allowing certain things to take place and it isn’t ours to question, because His ways aren’t our ways.

His ways are above our ways as far as the heavens are above the earth so we’re not to question God, we’re to trust Him, with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding, but rather in all our ways acknowledge Him and He will direct our paths Prov 3:5,6.

Before I get to carried away let’s get into this mornings text, so lets understand the flow, Jesus has just explained the parable of the sower to the disciples. They’re no doubt soaking it up, thinking well at least there will be those who receive the word on good ground and go on to bear fruit, at least those are safe, but now Jesus goes on to explain Satan’s counterfeit, he’s not content allowing the genuine article to flourish. He has to throw some confusion into the mix to deceive as many as possible, the old if you can’t beat em join em theory. And it’s been Satan’s most lethal and effective attack on the church and the kingdom of God yet, it’s unfortunate enough that very few relatively speaking flourish in Christ as it is. But now Satan has sown deception even in that mix and has destroyed no doubt millions over the years as they’ve fallen prey to his counterfeit.

Vs24-30

OK, there’s a few things we want to take note of in this parable but later on Jesus explains it so there’s no need to spend extensive time on it. But we notice in vs 25 that it was by night that the enemy came and sowed the tares, or weeds among the wheat. Or more specifically while men slept. Not because God was caught off guard, the bible tells us that He never slumbers or sleeps, but men can be lulled to sleep and it’s then that the enemy begins to sow his seeds of deception, right when we’re least expecting it and not watching for it.

Vs26

Now many believe that the type of weeds or tares that Jesus is speaking of here is called darnel, which looks virtually identical to wheat or barley until it buds forth. So it's not until the crop reaches maturity that they can ever really even be told apart. And that my friends is the trouble with a lot of cults and "isms" today. The heretic might give you 99% truth, and by that he lures you in, but then once you've bought into it and he's gained your trust, then he will begin to interweave these little twists here and there. Until finally you're so wapped out, that you're riding bicycles all over town in 120 degree temp trying to convince people of another testament of Jesus Christ and I'm not trying to ridicule anyone, I'm saying they're deceived. Now they might look an awful lot like wheat but believe me brothers and sisters when I tell you they're tares, they're the enemies counterfeit. They teach another Gospel than what your bible teaches, that's why they have their own, and they know you'll never come to their conclusions unless you read their material so they try and convince you to read it.

Yet Paul said in Gal 1:8 *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."* Or cast to the deepest, further most parts of hell, and where did Joseph Smith (the founder of Mormonism) get his gospel? From an angel or 2 that appeared to him in a vision and gave him his "divine" revelation that basically stated that any other belief other than what the Mormon Church purports is an abomination to God. So apparently all the millions of people that have ever lived prior to the vision of Joseph Smith died with out hope because God held out for all those yrs so that he alone could be instructed in the truth. It's heresy, they don't believe in the same Jesus you do, Satan has his counterfeits, that's just one of the many. A lot of people will teach you right out of the bible, but they themselves don't believe it's the infallible inspired word of God, now what do you make of that? There's some confusion for ya, what do they teach, do they just get together for story time and to learn some good moral ethics but you can't trust it all because it's not inspired by God. Jesus didn't really do miracles, and they try to explain scientifically the plagues of Egypt so as to take away from the power of God and the miraculous, but hey, they teach out of the bible. These are the things that Jesus was referring to, those that have a form of godliness, but they're deceived themselves and go about deceiving others; they're the tares in the midst of the wheat.

Vs27-28

So notice who it is that's behind all the confusion, all the deception, the sowing of weeds and the tares in the midst of the wheat; it's the enemy.

## Vs29

Now Jesus isn't saying to ignore a problem or not to speak the truth about circumstances or false teachings. We are to discern, but I can't condemn anyone to hell, nor can I forgive anyone their sin, that's God's job alone because He alone searches the heart. But God does give us certain factors in His word to help us in our discernment and He expects us to use them, what we want to notice in this vs is the reasoning behind the Masters decision to let the weeds grow with the wheat. You see; if it were up to me I'd say wipe them all out so that people can't be deceived, you can't force them to believe the truth, but maybe we can eliminate all the other options, but what did Jesus say here? (Read) It was out of concern for the wheat that the tares were allowed to stay, so that the wheat could fully mature, then the problem would be dealt with at harvest time.

## Vs30

So Believers and unbelievers, heretics and deceivers will all be allowed to grow together, but come harvest time notice who the 1<sup>st</sup> ones are that the reapers are sent to deal with, it's the tares. and What's the ultimate outcome? Judgment, being cast into the lake of fire, Rev 20:15.

## Vs31-32

So Jesus still using the seed/kingdom analogy now speaks of a mustard seed, He's spoken of how there will be that majority rejection of the gospel. But some people will respond positively to it, but even in the midst of the wheat field there's going to be some tares growing up alongside of the wheat.

Now He likens the kingdom to a mustard seed that grows unusually large, so much to the point that the birds of the air consider it home. And the fact that He calls the mustard seed the least of all seeds isn't to say that there's not another seed in the entire world smaller. As a matter of fact we know there is. It was simply a proverbial statement used to make a point, they knew exactly what He was talking about, and He uses the illustration of the mustard seed to illustrate a point a couple of different times. So I don't even entertain the skeptic who says see Jesus must not of been all knowing or else He would've known there was a seed smaller than the mustard seed.

Jesus never said gather around everybody for a lesson in science, that wasn't even an issue He was giving an illustration and making a comparison, that's it. And you have to remember that a parable uses objects of familiarity, and this was something they would all be familiar with. So if something like that hinders you from believing in Jesus, then believe me the parable of the mustard seed is the least of your worries. Many scholars look at this parable and see in this Jesus teaching a prophecy of the glorious growth of the church. and How it would start as a small seedling, with just a small handful of disciples but would eventually grow such to the extent that people from every tribe and tongue and nation from all over the world would be able to find rest and refuge in it's branches.

Though that sounds real good, I disagree, why, there's a couple of reasons #1 we find that many times throughout scripture that birds speak of evil, read Jer 5:26-27; and Rev 18:2 sometime as a reference to that. But even if we discarded that, you have to remember that little rule of thumb that gave to help you rightly divide the word of truth when it comes to parables. It's called expositional constancy, which means there has to be some form of consistency in our understanding of what certain things stand to represent in these parables or else we have no sense of accountability in our understanding, we just think what we think because we think it. There's no rhyme nor reason to it we just think it because it's the only way that we think it makes sense as far as what we believe goes.

Now in our studies on the parable of the sower what did we find out that the birds of the air were associated with? and We can know that we're right for certain because Jesus personally explained it, if you cross reference vs 4 with vs19 you find out that the birds of the air as portrayed in the parable of Jesus stand to represent or illustrate wickedness and evil. That gives me great difficulty in trying to get something real positive out of this parable. To me a more balance understanding (though I'm not claiming it's perfect) would be to say that Jesus instead of prophesying of how great the church or the kingdom on earth will become. It seems consistent with the flow of what He's been teaching so far to understand this as saying that the organized church or the kingdom will get large enough that eventually all kinds of evil influence will corrupt the church, or the kingdom on earth. and Infiltrate and mingle and integrate with the kingdom on earth, and surely when you see the pope holding a prayer meeting with the dahlia lama and Buddhist and other religions from all over the world contrary to Jesus Christ we can see the corrupting influence that's been induced into the organized church. Christmas and Easter both have pagan roots, there's all kinds of evil and wicked influence that's been embraced by the "church" and have made their nests in the branches of the church, even as there are tares sown among the wheat.

Vs33

Again this is very similar, there are many who see this as Christianity like leaven permeating the world until eventually we've influenced the whole world and that if enough time is granted, the whole world would be converted. But again it doesn't hold true or stay consistent with the teachings of Jesus, nor the biblical types. Jesus just got done teaching a majority rejection of the gospel, or the word of God in the parable of the sower.

So now He's going to turn right around and contradict Himself by saying eventually His disciples will influence the entire world, winning it over to the Lord. That doesn't make any sense whatsoever, and no where in scripture that I'm aware of does leaven stand to illustrate good. As a matter of fact every time that I've come across the mention of leaven in the bible, with out exception it's been linked with evil or spoke of sin, leaven puffs up, like pride, it corrupts, like sin and it's never used to illustrate something good.

Jesus spoke later of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees speaking of hypocrisy, religious pride and false doctrine. Paul also spoke of the leaven of false doctrine, in Gal 5:9, he spoke of carnality and immorality in the church as leaven in 1Cor 5:1-8. and So in this instance to try and make the leaven that Jesus is referring to here be in regards to something good would be to violate and contradict every other usage of it in scripture, it violates the *consistency*. And if the church was going to eventually when the world for Christ, sometime in the last 2,000 yrs shouldn't we've seen the world slowly moving that direction? But in reality we see just the opposite, the world isn't becoming more, and more Christ like, the Church is becoming more and more worldly and corrupt.

Plus Jesus leaves the seed/kingdom analogy here and speaks of a woman that introduces this leaven into the meal in contrast to the man in the last few parables. And else where in scripture we see the woman as a type of opponent to Christ, infusing the kingdom with false doctrine (not every time a woman is mentioned in scripture is speaking of an opponent of Christ, don't misunderstand me.) But in Zech vision in Zech 5:7-8 she's called wickedness in Rev 2:20 Jesus calls her Jezebel, in Rev 17:1 she's called the great harlot.

So Jesus is warning against false doctrine that will be infused into the organized church that we're to be on our guards against. Again when someone comes to your door wanting to hold a bible study in your house and they bring along with them other little pamphlets, i.e. the watchtower, the book of Mormon, whatever that should be all the evidence you need, they're injecting leaven into the meal of the word. You just stick to God's word and don't let them appeal to your spirituality by trying to add things to the word that's not in the word. To add to or take away from God's word is to corrupt God's word, Jesus is saying watch out because eventually false doctrine will permeate through and corrupt the kingdom, or the organized church. And as I stated a minute ago we see the affects of such things all around us in the church today. So if you take the parable in that basic light you see a harmonious flow of illustrations by Jesus beginning with a majority rejection of the truth and then even in that # of recipients tares would be sown among them. Evil influences would come from the outside and influence the church and false doctrines will be infused, corrupting the church internally. And again surely we don't see the church as an all inspiring influence in the world today but in reality the church is getting weaker and weaker. By the time you get to Rev ch 3 every church but 2 Jesus found fault with, one of those churches was being persecuted, which we talked about earlier and so it was clinging to Jesus. But the other wasn't a powerful influence dominating the world, Jesus said that they had just a little strength, so He would keep them from the hour of trial. The bible doesn't teach that things will get better and better until eventually the kingdom age is ushered in, in fact it teaches just the opposite.

Things will get worse and worse, that people will be deceived and being deceived until eventually that cup of iniquity is filled up and then judgment comes. Don't be misled by big swelling words of emptiness, things that sound real impressive but hold no biblical basis, but rather as Paul said "*Test all things; hold fast what is good.*" "*Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—(because) by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith*"

#### Vs34-35

So as we might expect from Matthew in his pointing out Jesus as the Messiah and King to his Jewish targets, he finds that even in Jesus' teaching method, He's fulfilling prophecy.

He's quoting specifically from the 78<sup>th</sup> Ps vs 2, but we find this little phrase "that it might be fulfilled" sort of peppered all throughout the book of Matt as he's pointing out how Jesus was the fulfillment of the OT prerequisites for the Messiah.

#### Vs36

So again we take note of who it was that was granted understanding to the parable, the multitudes were gone, and again we find His disciples, those who's hearts are true toward Him being enlightened to the truth contained in the parable.

#### Vs37-38

So again He's speaking of Satan's counterfeits that won't always be so obvious, they may look like the real deal, they might carry a bible to church, they may cast a tithe in the offering plate, but they don't know Jesus, they're playing church. They may look good on the outside, but there's something all together different going on, on the inside, and you may think they got it going on, you may look up to that person. But just because someone comes to church and even goes through all the motions doesn't mean they know Jesus necessarily, what's the fruit of that persons life. What is it that buds forth in their life the other 5-6 days of their week? Satan sows tares in the midst of wheat in the form of cults, in the form of religion, and even in the form of apathetic so called believers. Who go to church on Sunday and live like hell Friday and Saturday and have no real interest or desire for the things of God, but maybe just to cleanse their conscience. And then they feel all better about themselves, because they've done their duty, went to church and dropped in a tithe and now they've made up with God and all is well until next Friday. And Satan throws these people in the mix to cause confusion and frustration.

The bible speaks of false Christians in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 11:26, Satan has his counterfeit gospel Gal 1:6-9, encourages a counterfeit righteousness, Rom 10: 1-3, has a counterfeit church, Rev 2: 9 and at the end of the age will even produce a counterfeit Christ 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess 2:5-12. and Even though we might not always be able to tell the sons of the kingdom apart from the sons of the wicked one, ultimately God will deal with them. That's why we're not to judge, that's God's job because only He knows the heart. You catch someone on a bad day and they're doing what would seem unbecoming of a Christian to you, maybe all yelling and screaming at someone and so you label them a tare and start pointing fingers and trying to deal with them accordingly so as to uproot them, you might do some serious damage, it's best just to leave it God's hands because He's got a better plan anyway.

Vs39-43

Of course He's referring to judgment, it's not our business to deal with those people it's Gods. And even as the bible describes heaven as a very real place, it also speaks of hell as a very real place. And it's not going to be one big drunken orgy of a party as some rock stars would like to think, it's going to be eternal torment and suffering in the fire that's never quenched where the worm never dies. and Jesus takes the time on several occasion to teach on the reality of hell because He's gone through such an extent to make a means of escape from it. God sends no one to hell; He provided the means of escape, by receiving the righteousness of His Son, and by faith appropriating His shed blood to the cleansing of your sin. But when people refuse that means and they refuse to receive the love and grace of Jesus Christ then they make they make their own choice, and will have no one to blame through out all time and eternity but themselves.

Now real quick I don't want anyone to be confused thinking that this parable has anything to do with church discipline, because it doesn't. Jesus and the apostles were all very clear that we are to purge out the leaven and that we have a responsibility before God to with draw from anyone named a brother that refuses to repent of sin. But Jesus Himself personally isn't going to intervene and deal with the tares in a visible fashion until the end of the age at which time the tares will be cast into the fire. And then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Kind of a paraphrase of Dan 12:3 which says, *"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."* I would encourage you this morning to do the wise thing, and that's to make sure you're right with Jesus Christ That you might ensure that your name is written in the lambs book of life thereby receiving life everlasting.