

Matthew 21-01-17b

Let's continue our study now in Matthew chapter 13. And I had a good question over the break about tolerating the weeds or the birds or the leaven. How far does that go? Should we ignore the presence of sin and evil in our personal space, in our immediate vicinity? And of course, this is going to be a judgment call.

The parable here is talking about the field, the tree, and the entire lump of dough. And this is a big lump. The kind of dough that you could make out of a bushel of three measures is well over a bushel.

And it's a lot. It's a big thing. You get the idea that this is a big household and that there's quite a substantial pile of dough here, pile of grain or meal.

So this, I think, is more telling us about whether or not we should be looking to make societal change. If we're going to go on a campaign, if we're going to join an organization, if we're going to become a part of an effort to reform big things, big parts of the world, we're going to reform our section of the field. We're going to change by taking some sort of action ourselves.

And I think this is going to become clear as we look at Jesus' interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares, to which we now turn. In verse 34 of Matthew chapter 13, all these things, Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables, and without a parable, he did not speak to them. What this tells me by way of application is these truths are for mature believers.

You can't understand the parable if it is not given to you. It's not given to you if you don't have that good and noble heart to understand, to accept, and to keep. You simply aren't qualified for the information.

So speaking in parables ensures that the impact of this truth and the application of this truth is for those who are equipped to understand it, accept it, and apply it, to keep it. So then in verse 36, Jesus sent the multitudes away. The multitudes aren't going to benefit from the explanation.

They are not going to understand, they're not going to accept, and they are not going to keep and apply. So Jesus sends them away. And he goes into the house, much smaller venue.

His disciples came to him saying, explain to us the parable of the tares of the field. And by the way, I see significance even when it says Jesus went into the house. This is the place where those who can apply this can come in and be taught what it means and how to apply it.

There's a passage of scripture where Paul says, as Moses was faithful in all his house, so

the Lord Jesus was faithful in his house. And this is the bringing of salvation, the inception and presentation of the kingdom and its ultimate fulfillment. So even here, I think there is meaning.

Jesus goes into his house. This is when it's going to pertain. This is when it is going to apply in its first meaning.

So explain to us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said to them, he who sows the good seed is the son of man. The field is the world.

The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked. You notice one is in italics there. One I think is helpful because the wicked is singular.

It's not wickedness. And yet there is an argument to be made that because sons of the kingdom, it doesn't say sons of the king or sons of God or sons of Israel, sons of the kingdom. If you are the son of a thing, you represent it.

You embody its characteristics and its values. This is why Jesus is both son of God. In him dwells all the fullness of deity and bodily form.

And he is son of man. He was fully human. There are those who think he was just kind of human, but he wasn't able to sin.

He wasn't able to do certain things because he was also God. And if God can't be tempted, then Jesus couldn't be tempted. If God can't die, then Jesus can't die.

If God can't get hungry, Jesus can't get hungry. You see the problem with this argument. It's overly simplistic.

And, uh, I made the point to someone this past week that, uh, all arguments that try to say what Jesus could or could not do did or did not do in his incarnation based on his deity fail because could Jesus have chosen to sin? Could Jesus have chosen to do something other than the father's will? Great swaths of theological persuasion say, no, he could not. And this is the old Latin phrase. I think I mentioned it last week, known Posey Picquery, Posey, known Picquery, able not to sin.

Was he able not to sin? Uh, because of his love for the father and his love for us, he had the capacity to, but he chose not to. He was able not to sin. Or was he not able to sin? He's the copper wire welded to the iron bar of his deity.

And you can't bend the copper wire of his humanity because he's inextricably linked to deity deity can't sin. Therefore Jesus can't sin. Well, that argument is simplistic and runs afoul of many other things Jesus did that God does not do.

Does God get hungry? Does God get thirsty? The Bible says Jesus was hungry and Jesus was thirsty. He was hungry after 40 days in the wilderness, uh, being tested by Satan.

He was thirsty on the cross.

He got tired and slept in the back of the boat. So, so tired and so asleep that the storm that the disciples thought was going to drown them all did not wake him up. Uh, Jesus was born.

God is not born. Jesus died. God does not die.

Uh, and if you ever get into this realm because somebody wants to discuss it or your own thoughts take you in that direction, let me offer you a quick helpful analogy. Um, was Adam fully human? Yes or no? Yes, he was. Was Eve fully human? Yes, she was.

Could Adam conceive and bear a child? No. Could Eve conceive and bear a child, carry a child in the womb, conceive and bear? I'm not saying be the progenitor of, but Adam doesn't have a womb. So he cannot conceive that which is conceived in you.

Gabriel tells Mary is of the Holy Ghost. Adam has no ability to conceive because he doesn't have a womb. Can Eve conceive and bear a child? Yes, she can.

And yes, she does. Multiple times. She has Cain.

She has Abel. She has Seth and many other unnamed children, uh, of the female persuasion so that the human race begins to procreate and multiply on the face of the earth according to God's command. Now, if Eve is fully human and Adam is fully human, then how is it that Eve can do some things Adam can't do? You see the, the logical fallacy there just because they're both fully human doesn't mean there are some things that Eve can do that Adam cannot.

There are some things Adam can do that Eve cannot, and yet they are both fully human. Is God the Father fully deity? Yes. Is Jesus Christ fully deity? Yes.

Is God the Holy Spirit fully God? Yes. Do they nevertheless have unique functions and capabilities that the others do not have? God the Father did not die on the cross. God the Holy Spirit did not get born in Bethlehem.

The Holy Spirit doesn't get hungry. God the Father doesn't get tired. There are things that Jesus can do.

It does not lessen his deity or his status as fully God. There are great swaths of people that do not understand this. It's important to be careful with arguing from the Word of God and labeling somebody as a heretic because they say Jesus could do things that God the Father can't do.

God the Father is not possessed of a human body. Therefore, anything that a human body can do, God the Father doesn't typically do, and so on. Well, it's important for us to pay attention to what Scripture actually says.

Jesus sent the multitudes away. He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. This is the second person of the Trinity after his incarnation.

He is not Son of Man until he is born. This didn't happen in eternity past. The tares and wheat weren't sorted out and identified and elected and predestinated in eternity past.

These seeds are sown by Jesus after his incarnation. The one who sows is the Son of Man, not the eternal Word of John 1.1. See how important it is to keep your theological thinking straight? This, oddly enough, argues against election of individual human beings in eternity past or predestination of individual human beings as seeds that are going to be sowed as good seeds and that other seeds that are evil seeds are the unelect. If you don't believe in double predestination as a Calvinist, then you just say, well, God failed to make them good seeds, but it's their own fault.

Anyway, he who sows the good seeds is the Son of Man. So this is something that takes place after Jesus is incarnate. The field is the world.

The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom. You have the Son of Man and you have the sons of the kingdom, sons of the kingdom. This is son of in the sense of embodying imbued with the characteristics and qualities.

That's how we got off on my a side note a bit earlier is Jesus is both Son of God and Son of Man. He represents and embodies the fullness, all the fullness of deity and all the fullness of humanity, yet without sin. The one part of most of humanity he does not have is a sinful nature, but Adam and Eve did not start out with a sinful nature either.

That is a deficit. I'll give you another quick side note. When they talk about how evolution can build new creatures that are more complex and more advanced, and all of the diversity of biology happened from a few random algae or bacteria or whatever, and mutation and natural selection built elephants and giraffes and people and so on.

What we observe in change in DNA and in selection is that it is always a subtraction. How do you get poodles from wolves? You subtract from the DNA. How do you get Great Danes? How do you get St. Bernard's? How do you get collies? How do you get hounds? How do you get blue heifers? How do you get pit bulls? You subtract various parts of the Canis genome and only other elements are left.

It is a process of subtraction and it becomes less than what it started out being. When it says that he who sows the good seed is the son of man, the field is the world, the good seeds are sons of the kingdom. Sons of the kingdom, what does this mean? Who is a son of the kingdom? What does the previous seed parable tell us across all three Gospels? A son of the kingdom, this wheat that is going to bear fruit and be harvested at the end of the age, this is the good soil that bears fruit 60 fold, 30 fold, 100 fold, right? That's a son of the kingdom.

That's the wheat that is going to be harvested at the end of the age and gathered into the barn. So who are the sons of the kingdom? What do we know about them? What did we learn in the first session? When the seed comes, what do they do? They understand it, they accept it, and with a good and noble heart, they keep it, they apply it. So what is a son of the kingdom? Those who are asking and seeking and knocking, those to whom it has been given to understand, who when they understand, accept it, and having understood and accepted, they put it into practice, they keep it, they apply it.

These are the sons of the kingdom. The tares are the sons of the wicked, not wickedness, sons of the wicked. And this is the wickedness that Satan embodies and represents.

The son of man embodies and represents what humanity is supposed to be. The sons of the wicked are those who represent and embody the attitude, the nature, the choices, the priorities of those who follow Satan, who embody his characteristics. The enemy who sowed them is the devil.

Pretty clear. The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are the angels. Now, think about this.

Does Satan create people? What was the seed in the first parable? The word of the kingdom. You get to Luke, he says it's the word of God. Mark and Luke, this is the truth of God.

And that is what is sowed and those who receive it bear fruit. And it's the nature of the soil that is in view in that first parable. The soil would really be the believer.

What do you do with the available word of God? Do you understand it? Do you embrace it? Do you accept it? Do you apply it to the extent that you do? So it bears fruit. The power is in the seed here. Jesus says the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom.

And he's combining all of that truth contained in the first parable to say this wheat, these are the ones who are doing it right. He's no longer talking about where there are thorns or hard packed soil or rocky ground. He says, sons of the kingdom, I'm just now talking about those who are doing it right, doing what they are supposed to do.

And it combines the nature of the soil with the reception and nurture of the seed, the deepening of the root and the producing of the fruit. The tares are the sons of the wicked ones. So these tares, they're not people created by the devil.

These are people who have as soil embraced the dandel seed, the weed seed, the tare seed and have produced its fruit. That's what they find conducive. That's what they nurture.

That's what they want to produce is something that looks good, but has no actual fruit

unto eternal life. It looks good now. It looks good in the beginning and during a great part of the growing season.

But when it comes time to measure, where is the fruit? There is no fruit. So to be clear, the tares that are sown are not, even though Jesus says they are sons of wicked and the good seed is sons of the kingdom. We're still talking about what do you do with the message? You either embrace the true message of the word of God, the word of the kingdom and produce fruit.

And it is the only seed that will produce the kind of wheat that God is going to gather into his barn for future use. Future kingdom presence, opportunity, inheritance, all of those things are represented by those who qualify themselves for it by producing that eternal wheat seed. It's multiplied.

It bears fruit. It's evident at the conclusion of the growing season. There are others who can look good for a time, but when you come to look, it's like when Jesus comes and looks at the fig tree, looking for figs, and they're not there.

And that fig tree is cursed. You come to these darn ale stalks and you're looking for wheat and it isn't there. The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are the angels.

This makes good sense. Jesus says in verse 41, he's going to send out his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom and so on. What is the one element in the parable that he does not explain? Everything else in the parable, Jesus decodes here, but there's one element that he does not.

Do you see it? I know at least one person who saw it last week. What's missing from the story? While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, went his way. When the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, the tares also appeared.

What's in verse 27? Read it. So the servants of the owner came. The servants, these are the douloi, doulos, they call plebes at the Air Force Academy, doulis.

These are the low, and the owner here, this is the, this is the householder. So these are the household servants. These are the servants.

They are not reapers, are they? They are servants. Jesus explains every other element of the parable, but he does not address the servants. I find this significant.

Who would be coming to the owner, the householder during the millennial kingdom and saying, I noticed that there's an awful lot of false profession and obedience that is not from the heart and those who are actually sons of the evil one existing and multiplying amongst the wheat here. Who would come and tell the Lord Jesus this during the millennial kingdom who aren't angels, us possibly. And as a mystery that is not revealed,

Jesus doesn't parse that part of the parable.

He just says, there are servants who are going to come in Jesus' day. Somebody could have said, well, these would be those who are, you know, good guys, but the good guys are represented by the wheat. And this appears to be somebody who is above and able to evaluate wheat and tares and be at some similar level to the householder himself.

So interesting idea. As the tares, verse 40 are gathered and burned in the fire. So it will be at the end of this age, the end of the age, it will be at the end of the age.

The age is going to continue until the end. And this is really important because of what Jesus is about to say, the son of man will send out his angels during the arrest. You can look this up in Matthew.

We'll see it when we get there, but during the arrest in the garden of Gethsemane and the disciples want to fight and Jesus tells them not to do so. And he makes a remark. He says, do you not know that I could appeal to my father and he would give me 12 legions of angels? I could petition the father and he would send 12 legions of angels to me.

By the way, if Jesus had petitioned the father and said, please send me 12 legions and Jesus had used them to avoid arrest and crucifixion and so on, he says he could have done so, but he chose not to, right? He could have violated the will of the father that he acknowledged in the garden, not my will, but thine be done. He says, do you not know that I could call these angels? I could totally do that, but I choose not to. I think if he had violated the will of the father at that point, that would qualify as a sin.

And Jesus says, I could do so, but I choose not to. So if you wonder about the free will of the Lord Jesus and the possibility during the temptations or at any other point in his incarnation that he could have chosen to do other than the will of the father, Jesus himself says so on the night of the arrest. So that's something little free, no charge tidbit.

The son of man will send out his angels. He has angels that belong to him. They have been allocated to him by the father.

They will gather out of his kingdom, whose kingdom? The son of man's kingdom. This field that is the world and contains the wheat and the tares, that's his kingdom. It says the field is the world.

People want to say, oh, it's the world of today. You've got the church, you've got false professors and so on. Jesus says it is his kingdom.

Well, is Jesus sitting on the throne of David yet? Is he in his kingdom yet? No, this is the millennial kingdom. And they will gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness. The time that passed in the field where these things

grew up together is the time of the kingdom.

And these are gathered out of the kingdom. The end of the age is the end of the kingdom age. The end of the age, end of the millennial kingdom.

This is Gog Magog. He will send his angels, those things that offend and those who practice lawlessness. The sons of the wicked practice lawlessness.

They are against the principles, the doctrines, the ordinances, the commands of God. The angels will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

And this is a process. Jesus says that in verse 30, let both grow together until the harvest. At the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, first gather together the tares and bind them in bundles.

Remember the sheep and goats judgment and Jesus says at that time, all the nations will come before him and he will separate them as a shepherd separates sheep from goats, all nations. These bundles are nations. They're going to be the nations that are in the rest of the world, outside the kingdom of Israel with its capital in Jerusalem and its reigning King and the sons of David reigning with him, gather them in bundles.

There are entire nations in the millennial kingdom that are going to be surreptitiously practicing lawlessness and ducking under the radar, ducking under the swing of the rod of iron, but they are going to be gathered into bundles and burned groups. And bundles tells you that there's a lot of them. This is not a few random tears.

There are so many that they can be bundled and burned as bundles cast into the furnace of fire. Verse 42, then verse 43, the righteous will shine forth as the sun where not in the kingdom of the son of man, kingdom of the father, two different kingdoms. The son of man will send his angels.

They will gather out of his kingdom. Those things that offend those will be cast into the lake of fire. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.

If there's any doubt about the timing of this end of the millennial kingdom, kingdom of the son is the point at which the kingdom of the father is going to begin new heavens, new earth, new Jerusalem. And the righteous will shine as the son. He who has ears, let him hear.

We've talked about how important it is to not only recognize the millennial truth contained here, but just as with other old Testament age truths, kingdom age truths, what does it mean for us? There were two ways to reap in the ancient near Eastern world. One was to use a sickle and to cut and you have stubble left in the field as a result. The other was to grab the stalks and uproot.

I've got a Matthew commentary by a fellow named Lenski that was written a long time ago. And he mentions that in 1925, he was in the Holy land and he saw both forms of reaping taking place in fields. He saw reapers going out and pulling up the wheat and pulling up the weeds by the roots.

And he could fully understand why Jesus said, if you try to pull the weeds too soon, you will damage the wheat and it will not be able to bear all of its fruit in prematurely seeking to remove the sons of the wicked. You harm the ability of the sons of the kingdom to bear their fruit. The sons of the kingdom bear their fruit when the sons of the wicked are left in place.

And it is the contrast at the judgment of bearing fruit in undisturbed ground. The wheat is not prevented from bearing its fruit by the presence of the darnel. This is not like the thorns that choke the word.

You can still bear your fruit. So to answer the good question that was answered on the break, when is it time to take more proactive measures to separate from evil, to distance ourselves from wickedness, to do something about it as it were, so long as it does not prevent us from bearing our fruit at the point that something interferes. If your TV takes so much of your time that you can't reflect on the word of God, you can't make that kind of Psalm 1, planted by the rivers of water, bearing your fruit in your season.

If you can't do that because of the presence of something that pertains to the wicked, that's the time to remove it. That's the time to separate from it. If it is a distraction, if it becomes a thorn that chokes instead of a darnel that is growing rather harmlessly beside, yes, it's not wheat.

Yes, it's not productive, but it is not choking the word and rendering it unfruitful. When it starts doing that, that's time for us to take action. That's time for us to be proactive.

We can pray God to remove it. Wheat doesn't typically have the ability to choke out weeds, but God can remove it. God can have a mini time of reaping in our lives and pull out the tears, gather them in bundles and burn them.

We can appeal to him. We look to him for guidance. We look to him for what we should do when we are in contact with, surrounded by that, which is of the wicked.

So wonderful pertinence and application. It should not shock or surprise us that there is a lot of weedage in the world in which we live, in the world in which we are seeking to grow and produce fruit. Not to worry.

God has a plan. God has a time and he has chosen to leave it in place until the time of harvest. So it is up to us not to get distracted and become subjective about the evil in our society, in our culture, on the news, in the government, in the world, but to focus on growth.

If we are growing, we're good to go. Look to the harvest. Wait for the action of God.

If you really believe that something is so dire and so powerful and so present that you can't grow, you can't learn, you can't produce the fruit hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold, that's the time to take steps. That's the time to prayerfully examine whether we need to touch not the unclean thing, hate the garment spotted by the flesh, what fellowship has light with darkness. After one or two attempts to reconcile with those who have ought against us, we separate from them as we would from a heathen and a tax collector.

There is a time for that. This parable says that in the world at large, in the corporate realm, in the large realms of culture, civilization, the big environment, it's not our place to go out there trying to pull weeds. I really believe that a lot of Christian endeavor in the realm of trying to make it a Christian nation or a Christian community by legislation, by overt means, by appealing to various powers that be, may run afoul of this guidance.

So fruitful meditation here. We'll continue our study and move on to the parable of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price and the dragnet next time. Just powerful, powerful truths Jesus presents here, not only to his people, Israel, looking ahead to their kingdom, but to his body, the church, as we look ahead to ours.

But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful light that your word shines on our path. The words of the Lord Jesus are each one a treasure.

Not a one falls to the ground. Not a one is wasted. They are all pertinent and applicable for us.

We pray that as we reflect on what we've seen in your word, that God, the Holy Spirit, will minister it to our hearts, give us that understanding that enables us to accept and to apply and to bear the fruit that characterizes those who have a good and noble heart. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.