

Everybody but Sam had signed up for the new company pension plan that required 100% employee cooperation – otherwise the plan was off. His boss and fellow employees begged and pleaded, but he wouldn't budge. Finally, the company president called Sam in – gave him a copy of the plan and told him to sign it or he was fired. Immediately Sam signed the papers. Afterwards, the president asked Sam, "Why didn't you do this the 1st time?" Sam replied, "Well sir, no one explained it quite so clearly until now."

We're in a series of lessons on some of the most prolific teachings Jesus shared using parables. **A parable is a story w/ a point – an earthly lesson w/ a spiritual punchline – stories that once explained can bring remarkable clarity.**

Last Sunday we looked at a parable that described the work of Christ – the Parable of the Sower. In this teaching, the sower (Jesus), indiscriminately casts seed (Gospel) into the soil of the heart, where it landed on unique surfaces. In each case, nothing was wrong w/ the seed, yet differing factors prevented the seed from surviving/thriving. Whether the soil was trampled, rocky, or thorny, the seed couldn't germinate to fruitfulness; but for the seed that landed in fertile soil, it was able to germinate and produce fruit. **Jesus' point was only that which has fruit has life.**

Juxtaposed to the Parable of the Sower is the Parable of the Wheat and Tare. Whereas the Parable of the Sower is about the work of Christ in the hearts of men, the Parable of the Wheat and Tare is a parable about the work of Satan.

He shared another parable w/ them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared too. The servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along w/ them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’” ...Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned w/ fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his

angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

In this parable we discover an important teaching – to profess Christ doesn't necessarily mean you possess Christ.

Video – Plastic Jesus

Ryan is the reason Jesus shared the parable of the wheat and tare. In this parable we discover that sown among the seeds of true believers are people who on the outside look like believers, but in actuality are not – people who are good and religious, but in actuality have bought into the lies of the enemy. Sadly, many of these people think they have a relationship w/ God, but when you pull back the curtain of faith, you discover they've put their faith in something other than Jesus. Jesus likened these people to a seedling called tares, b/c they look like the real thing, but there is no fruit.

Remember – Only that which has fruit has life.

tare (*zizanian*) tare (darnel) is a weed that looks identical to wheat in the early stages of life but can't be distinguished until the head sprouts forth and produces a fruit just prior to the harvest. Wheat has fruit, but tares do not.

In the context of Jesus' teaching, a tare is two things:

- 1 A tare is a misleading teaching planted into the hearts of people by Satan to convince people of a lie leading them away from God's Truth – it is a contrary teaching.
- 2 A tare is also the person who has accepted this contrary teaching who is then planted among in the world among the church to lead God's people astray – people who give the appearance of being saved – but are NOT!

So tares are in the world and in the church. They're in the choir, the deacon body, the pews, and possibly even on your church staff. They attend and they never attend. They give and they hoard. They're loosely involved and they're intricately involved. Often times, tares aren't the worst church members but possibly the best church members – but they are in fact lost b/c there was never a genuine life changing transaction of faith. *unknown*

In this parable we notice three things regarding the wheat and the tare that's important for all of us to understand.

I The Seeds are PLANTED Together

In this parable two different seeds are sown – yet w/ the naked eye you can hardly tell the difference b/w them as they are planted and begin to grow. They look very similar.

The Bible is clear that Satan often times will not work opposite of God, but right alongside of God counter to truth. According to Paul in **2 Cor. 11:14**, Satan disguises himself as an angel of light – meaning he uses tactics/teachings closely aligned w/ God’s truth but are in fact a lie.

The **WRONG** seed planted in the **RIGHT** heart will always lead to a **WRONG** result no matter how well intended. If I plant apple seed thinking I’ve planted orange seed – no matter how much I want oranges – I’m still reaping apples.

If what was sown in your heart was a seed of religion, of philosophy, of humanism, of good works, of anything other than the truth of the Gospel – that God loves you and sent His one and only son to die on the cross to pay for your sin and then rose from the dead three days later – then instead of producing oranges– you’re going to get apples.

When the seed of your conviction was planted in the soil of your heart, was it God’s seed of truth or some poor substitute placed there by Satan – it will only be evident by the fruit born over time. If there is fruit there is life. No fruit; no life!

Folks, churches around the world are filled w/ good hearted people who have bought into a lie of religious conjecture that doesn’t align w/ the Bible – teachings which lead people away and astray from the God who loves them. Concepts and dogma that’s manmade instead of God inspired.

Any teaching that promotes Christ w/out the cross and w/out commitment and surrender is a contrary teaching.

If what you received was a teaching about your comfort, care, convenience, and entertainment, then you were sold a bill of goods that's less than Gospel. If what you were taught was centered on what you can do instead of on what Christ did for you, then you've been duped. This is what we spoke about when we talked about the Kernel of Wheat.

Remember – just b/c a person professes the truth it doesn't necessarily mean that they possess the truth.

II The Seeds PROGRESS Together

The reason Satan sows tares into the church is to confuse the truth, weaken the body, and complicate the ministry.

Weeds can grow anywhere. While they cannot grow in Christ, they can certainly grow in the choir, in position and stature, in good deeds, and so on. They can grow so intently that they get intertwined among the wheat. Once this occurs, to go and pull out the weeds would be to pull up the wheat.

Like you, I've been in church a while. And on more than one occasion I've seen wheat destroyed by tares. I've seen how tares so wrap themselves around God's people that upon their removal many church members were pulled away.

In this parable, Jesus teaches us that we will always have tares among the body and that to go after them can and will affect those whose lives are intertwined w/ them.

This doesn't mean we allow wolves among the sheep, but neither does it mean we always launch a counter attack. Instead, it requires great patience and wisdom to manage the seedlings of Satan embedded among us.

- 1 B/c God wants no one to perish but all to be saved.
- 2 B/c if mishandled we can do more damage than good.

Nonetheless, *we can't forget that just b/c a person professes Christ – it doesn't mean they possess Christ.* Ultimately, in time, that'll be determined by God.

III The Seeds will be PROCESSED Together

Here's a simple reality we have to accept if we're to endure the assault of tares among the wheat... ultimately, **only God knows the difference and will tend to the lost at the final judgment** – until then, we're to work under the leading of the H.S. to see that the true Gospel is proclaimed and practiced among both the wheat and the tare.

Our job is to be Jesus to the world in word and deed so that until the harvest all people can experience the truth.

Yes. The church is filled w/ Ryan's. People who've heard the truth, acknowledge the truth, and even proclaim the truth – but they don't **POSSESS** the truth. They are tares sown among the wheat – but whose lives produce no fruit.

Which brings us back to where we started. In the economy of God, He has sown the truth of the Gospel into the hearts of all people. But just as He was sowing truth, the enemy too was sowing untruth. For many, their version of the truth has been wrapped in the package of another religion, and is less than the truth. For some it has been packaged in a form of humanism that places its faith in the idea of nothingness. For some, and possibly the most dangerous, it has been delivered wrapped in a Christian/denominational package that's dangerously close to the truth yet is far from the Gospel. Yet only the truth that salvation can be found in no one or nothing else but Christ alone by grace through faith will suffice. Jesus is the one and only way to a relationship w/ God. To profess anything other than Christ alone is to possess something less than grace.

What teachings have banked your eternity? Did you get the true seed of the Gospel or some lessor version? If there is any doubt, any conviction, then why not today get it right!