

THE PARABLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES
MATTHEW 13: 24-30

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Major Point of the Parable: Life in the kingdom and the church means coexisting with evil in the body for a season. However, a time of separation and judgment will come.

Other Lessons:

- We must always be mindful that in every great and good cause we are always fighting on two fronts---the enemy without and the enemy within.
- The challenge of life in the church is not simply found in the enemies of righteousness from without but the enemy within.
- The enemy within is always the greatest enemy---
 - Within ourselves
 - Within our families
 - Within our friendship and social circles
 - Within colleagues and supporters in a particular cause
 - Within the church
- The enemy within is so effective because
 - The enemy within has our heart
 - The enemy within shares some of our values and goals
 - The enemy within is not always evident at first
 - The enemy within knows our vulnerabilities in ways that enemy without does not. Some weaknesses we can only see and learn from being close.
- For all of the above reasons, when Satan really wants to break us he will focus on the enemy within.
 - Most church splits and fights are due to enemy within---misunderstanding, turf wars, lack of forgiveness, pride, pettiness, hurt and wounded egos and feelings from within.
 - Many people leave church not simply because of problems from without but because of what they have encountered and experienced from within.
- From whence does the enemy from within come?
 - The enemy within comes from the enemy without
 - The enemy within is a plant; a corrupting foreign agent on assignment for disruption and destruction
 - God does not send enemies from within to test us. God uses what the enemy without has sent to grow us and bless us.
- How can the enemy without be so effective in planting among us?
 - We sometimes fall asleep---we let down our guard; we slack off in our spiritual disciplines; we start trusting in own strength.
 - We can be spiritually arrogant and think that our field cannot be corrupted by the enemy.

- We can become so focused on one part of the field that we sometimes fail to observe and discern when something has been planted within us in another part of the field.
- We fail to recognize how stealthily and cunningly the enemy from without works. We should never confuse stealth with supreme power and ultimate authority. Busyness is not power, but busyness.
- Considering all the above we must accept the enemy within as a given
 - Therefore, we should not be discouraged when tares appear, even though we may be surprised by the specific identity of the tare.
 - Tares can be connected to some good wheat. Tares have constituency and alignment among wheat.
 - Tares planted by enemy without are not always immediately evident. Tares grow along with wheat. As wheat grows so does enemy within.
 - As there is a season for planting there is also a season for revelation.
 - Revelation occurs when there is activity and growth in the field. Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Life with Tares
 - Presence of tares does not stop wheat from growing
 - Meaning of faithfulness, commitment and love is exemplified when tares are present
 - Presence of tares does not mean owner has given up ownership of the field
 - Presence of tares does not prevent harvest in the field
 - We must never forget that judgment day is coming for tares and reward is coming to wheat who continue to grow despite presence of tares