

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 20TH-21ST, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

### NATURE OF THE KINGDOM (MATTHEW 13:24-43)

After giving his explanation for teaching in parables and exposing the truth of the receptiveness of their hearts, He 'puts another before them.'

- 'Paratithemi' – 'To set before' – For those that would listen and hear the truth of Jesus, He presents them with the opportunity to know more.
- Instead of giving away the knowledge of 'things hidden since the foundation of the world' (vs.35), Jesus offers a chance for us to dig deeper.
- Farming, fishing, and baking are all normal daily activities for Galileans, so Jesus chooses to use these familiar tasks to explain what the kingdom of heaven is like.

The first parable he tells in this passage is of the wheat and the tares. (darnel)

- Before modern sorting processes, darnel was many times mistaken for wheat in its early stages until the plant reached maturity.
- Not only was it useless and quite frustrating for farmers, it was poisonous if it was eaten and dangerous to the health and security to the wheat around it.

The truth represented here is, the fruit of counterfeit truth and false teaching today looks pleasing and satisfying, but it will fill us with poisonous false hope and can damage the integrity of the church. (Jer. 23:16, Matt. 24:24)

- The only way to tell the difference between real and counterfeit is by keeping our eyes and ears focused on the truth of God's Word. (1Jn 4, Mat 7)
- Roman law records that it was a common crime in this time for a farmer to get revenge on another farmer by sabotaging their field with darnel seed.
- Like a thief in the night, the enemy comes and plants the bad seed especially while the servants are distracted or asleep.

The bad seed wasn't immediately noticed by the servants. It wasn't until after the grain or fruit had shown that the servants noticed the damage.

- In the same way, we may not notice the seeds of the enemy that have been sown, even in our own hearts until the fruit is showing.
- The servants were startled and confused and questioned the wisdom of the master and the quality of his seed, even though they were asleep!
- Matthew warns us of false prophets (Matt 7:15), deceived believers (Matt 7:21-23), and foolish bridesmaids (Matt 25:1-12) that are asleep on the job, neglecting or abusing the freedoms and authority loaned to them by God.

After the master explains to them that is in fact the enemy that has sown the bad seeds and not him, the servants want to know if they can go root up and destroy the false wheat.

- Essentially, they are asking, 'Do you want us to go and enact your justice and judgment on this false message and false believers?' (vs. 28)
- Jesus response is astounding for even us today. 'No, because you may damage the good trying to eliminate the bad.' (vs. 29)
- In this we see the wisdom and mercy of God, that he wants to preserve the good even if it means allowing the evil and wicked to exist for now.

Next, he uses the mustard seed and the leaven to describe what some scholars believe as an example of the spread of the Gospel of the Kingdom or the dangers of the spread of false doctrine.

- In either case, the basic premise remains the same: from the smallest (humble) beginnings, good and evil will both spread, even unnoticed, until it will accomplish its goal or do its damage.
- The mustard seed is the smallest seed that will mature into a small tree. (2-10 meters) This tree that Jesus describes will have branches where birds can find shelter. (vs. 32)
- Like the humble beginnings of the seed, Jesus came as a baby, grew to maturity, and fulfilled God's covenant in surprising ways to the religious leaders and nation of Israel.
- Jesus still chooses to dumbfound the intelligent.

Some scholars believe the 'birds of the air that come and make nests in its branches' are a further revealed truth of the kingdom from Daniel 4 that the kingdom of heaven will include peoples from all nations, both Jew and Gentile.

- This is a reality that we need to gasp today. God is not concerned with the outside stature of man (Saul). He will choose weak instruments (Gideon) to bring about His powerful and diverse kingdom.

Leaven, yeast in this case, is used by Christ to show that 'the whole is defined by what is inside.'

- Evil and false doctrine corrupts and spreads through the whole and, when mature, comes to identify the character of the believer. (1 Cor. 5)
- In this way, the Holy Spirit is a 'piece of the original' that comes to live inside us, spreading through and changing us to look like Christ. (Rom. 8, 1 Jn. 2)

After teaching the crowds, Jesus goes with his disciples into the house (Peter's) to further explain the secrets of the kingdom.

- Good sower – Son of Man, field – world, good seed – sons of the kingdom, weeds – sons of the evil one, enemy – the devil, harvest – end of the age, reapers – angels.

Here Jesus speaks of a figure from Daniel 7, called the 'Son of Man'.

- Just as Jesus is the Word from the beginning, the Son of God, and Messiah to the world, He is also the one who has been given dominion over the whole of creation by God the Father.

Here is where we better understand the master of the field's answer to his servants not to uproot the weeds.

- It is not our role or responsibility to bring about the judgment of God. We are to cast seed. (Matt 28)
- If we trust God, then we must trust that all His ways are just and that he will one day bring the whole world into submission to Him. (Deut. 32:4)

We must be patient for God's judgment (in the world or with other pronounced believers) because our wrathful anger does not bring about the righteousness of God. (James 1:20)

- In the end, wicked will be gathered and thrown into the fiery furnace and the righteous will 'shine like the sun.'

### COST, VALUE, SORT (MATTHEW 13:44-50)

Jesus and Matthew now teach about the kingdom of heaven with concepts of 'cost' and 'value'.

- Anything in this world that is of great value, has great cost. The kingdom of heaven is no different.
- Like the man who finds treasure hidden in a field and sells all that he has to purchase that land, Jesus gave up all He had to purchase us as His children.
- He expects us to do the same, not out of obligation, but out of joy and delight because He first loved us!

With the merchant of pearls, we see a man that is searching for a pearl that is more valuable than the rest and when he finds it, he sells his lesser pearls in order to obtain the best!

- Those of us that are 'seeking first the kingdom of God' (Mt. 6:33) will surely come across some 'good things' in this life, but we must prioritize the Gospel over the comforts and temporary blessings of this life.

What is so breath-taking and beautiful about these two parables is that the man who found the treasure and the merchant that found the pearl, after giving up all they had on this world, they still experienced their reward here and now, not just in the future.

- What we learn from these is that the kingdom of heaven is precious, personal, and priceless.
- Like a pearl, it is worth sacrifice, suffering, and persecution just like Jesus did for His Church. (Rev 21:21)

Last, we come to the 'dragnet', which scholars mention is cast wide, like the Gospel, to catch all who may hear, but will ultimately, and in God's timing, bring everyone to the shores of eternity.

- Here on the beach, just like in the field, the angels will be called upon to sort through the righteous and 'pluck out of the middle of' them, those that are false, wicked, and causers of sin and cast out.
- Those that are righteous will be gathered to Christ.

### NEW AND OLD (MATTHEW 13:51-53)

Jesus, like a good teacher, checks for understanding. Before moving on he wants to make sure His disciples grasp the weight and importance of what they have just heard.

- 'Therefore' – Since they understand, then he reminds them and us that as disciples, we are 'scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven' and carry a burden of responsibility.

#### SCRIBES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Studying the Word. New and Old.
  2. Understanding its implications.
  3. Living-out its applications.
  4. Teach/treat others with grace and compassion.
- Like disciples then, and now, we are blessed because we have been given the full counsel of God's Word to spread the Gospel in our world and in the Church. (Acts 20:27)

**Although these parables were meant for the world, they now have truth for the Church. Be Patient, the Son of Man will bring His Glory. Don't fall into the same trap as the Pharisees, desiring political and earthly bound power expecting it to have spiritual implications.**

1. Do I trust God to bring about justice? Or do I only trust myself or the leaders I have chosen?
2. Do I value 'the eternal kingdom' enough to trade everything for it?
3. Will you study His word, live out its truth, and treat/teach others with grace and compassion?