

sermon study guide

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Sermon Title: The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like... Part 3: The Wheat and the Weeds

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What in your house or garage needs sorting out? How do you decide what to keep and what to donate/throw away?
2. The internet is a good example of evil and good co-existing. If you could either do away with the internet for good, or allow it to continue, which would you choose and why?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Matthew 13:24–30, 36-43; 2 Peter 3:9

3. Jesus begins this parable by saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like...” In what sense is the kingdom of heaven already here? Why doesn’t God just “pull the weeds”?
4. In verses 36-43 Jesus explains the parable to His disciples. What about these truths do you find encouraging? Unnerving?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Discuss how this parable directs you to respond to the evil in this world. In what ways can overzealous judgment harm our mission as believers?
6. We continue to live and work in a world where we struggle with the effects of evil daily. What can you do to be an overcomer in the midst of the “tension” and struggle? (See Romans 12:21)

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Re-read 2 Pet 3:9. How can you be inspired by the patience of God? Take some time to pray for a heart of patience, and for those in your life who don’t know Christ.

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THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 13:24–30; 36-43

2 Pet 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

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sermon study summary

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like – Part 3: The Wheat and the Weeds

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“Why doesn’t an all-powerful God just obliterate all evil in one masterstroke?”

Jesus told the parable of the ‘Wheat and the Weeds’ (Matthew 13:24–30; 36-43) to address this question. We have a fascinating story of a farmer who sows good seed, wheat, in his field. While sleeping, a rival farmer sows some weeds in his wheat field. As the wheat and weeds mature the workers realize there is a big problem. Matthew 13:27 says, “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’”

Don’t we, like the owner’s servants in the parable, question God in a similar way saying, “God, you are good, you made everything good. Where did all the evil come from?” The servant’s master replies saying the weeds are the “work of an enemy.” In verse 28 the servants ask their master, “Do you want us to go pull them up?” The master’s response is puzzling. He tells the servants to leave the weeds to grow along with the wheat until the harvest!

Jesus interprets the parable for the disciples in Matthew 13:36–43.

- The good farmer who sowed the seed is the Son of Man, Jesus.
- The wheat represent those who belong to His Kingdom.
- The enemy who plants the weeds is Satan, who opposes God’s Kingdom
- The field is the world

In wrestling with the problem of evil, we need to remember:

1. **Satan is at Work.** While God’s reign is active in the world - so is evil. The two are opposing, competing, no middle ground. Spiritual warfare and hostility are to be expected. If we are to accept what the Scriptures say then we must accept the reality of evil and the presence of the evil one who opposes the work of God.

As individuals who are actively living as ambassadors for the gospel, we can expect opposition.

2. **Evil will be destroyed.** For now God’s Kingdom co-exists with the evil kingdom of this world, but God is not inactive or apathetic. God has a plan. At the right time, He is going to put an end to all evil. Satan has already been defeated and one day his evil influence will be fully removed. So, when we see evil around we are not to despair!
3. **God is patient.** A final question: why is God delaying the full consummation of His Kingdom? He is being patient. 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

God in his mercy is not sending judgment yet because He is giving an opportunity for people to repent and turn to Him for salvation.