

Parable of the Wheat and Weeds Matt 13:24-30, 36-43 (NLT)

24 Here is another story Jesus told: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. 25 But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. 26 When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. 27 "The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' 28 "'An enemy has done this!' the farmer exclaimed. "'Should we pull out the weeds?' they asked. 29 "'No,' he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.'"

36 Then, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, "Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field." 37 Jesus replied, "The Son of Man^[e] is the farmer who plants the good seed. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. 39 The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world,^[e] and the harvesters are the angels.

40 "Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

Q.1. What is a parable? Why did Jesus use them?

Q.2. Jesus spoke a lot about 'the kingdom of heaven (God)'. What is it? How does it become evident over time?

Q.3. Who are the key actors in this parable vv.24-30? What happens at harvest?

Q.4. Why does the parable puzzle the disciples?

Q.5. With vv.36-43 in mind who do the key actors represent? Who are the wheat and the weeds?

Q.6. What do you think Jesus' main point is in this parable?

Q.7. Read Matt 7:15-20; how do the two passages relate to each other?

Q.8. What does this parable teach us about God's patience? Why is he patient see 2 Pet 3:8-9?

Q.9. Do you think this parable relates to: i. the world, ii. the church? How?

Think, pray & Act – application

Q.10. Who are you in this parable?

Q.11. Read Matt 9:35-38; What is the harvest field like where you are? What does Jesus invite you to do?

Q.12. How can our church help the wheat to grow?

Q.13. How would you explain what Jesus is saying in vv.40-43 to a 12 year old?

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (my suggested answers)

NB. Please answer the questions yourself. We all have different ways of answering; God may give you greater insights than mine. Put '*John thinks*' ... before each answer.

Q.1. For Jesus parables are stories with a sting cryptically included to raise people's imagination and hackles. They challenged his hearers to imagine how they are included, 'is this about me?'. Parables invite us to judge ourselves and challenge our existing worldview (e.g. the Good Samaritan or Prodigal Son). They are often about God's kingdom and defended the main thrust of Jesus' mission and message (e.g. his willingness to welcome and eat with sinners). They also explain why he (even as Messiah) doesn't have universal appeal – many will not follow him (e.g. the 4 soils)

Q.2. God's kingdom is his 'saving rule'. The phrase is used by Jesus to suggest that God was becoming king in and through his ministry. The word 'kingdom' should often be translated 'kingship' or 'reign'.

Q.3. Key actors: the farmer (sows wheat), the servants (help sow and tend the wheat); the enemy (sows weeds); the harvesters (sort the wheat from the weeds at harvest-time)

Q.4. The disciples are puzzled by who Jesus means by the key actors and how it relates to God's saving rule (kingdom).

Q.5. The farmer is Jesus, the servants are the disciples, the enemy is Satan and the harvesters are God's angels. The wheat are those who, at Jesus' return, have followed him and bore good fruit. The weeds are those who, at Jesus' return, have followed Satan and produced weeds.

Q.6. The main point is 'patience' – God's kingdom is growing but mysteriously; and his followers are to patiently wait in humble service for Jesus' return.

Q.7. They both talk about harvest time when God separates people (unfruitful weeds or fruitful wheat)

Q.8. God is the patient farmer, working for a great harvest. Jesus won't return until the gospel has gone to all nations and they've had a chance to repent. That many people won't respond suggests they are like the weeds to be collected and discarded.

Q.9. It relates to God's work in the world rather than the church. Although the church should heed the warning and disciple everyone to be wheat not weedy. There is also an evangelistic challenge here: to sow the good seed in our neighbourhood.

Q.10. I vary – servant, wheat, weed.

Q.11. Your answer.

Q.12. Our church can offer: worship services (to encourage, instruct and challenge); pastoral care, bible study, fellowship and service opportunities.

Q.13. Your answer.