



“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain,” James 5:7.

Wait on the Lord

Lesson Aim: To encourage patient waiting for God’s vindication of righteousness.

L264. Date: March 1978. **Text:** Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.

Topic: Christ: Parables of.

The good and the bad will grow side by side until separated at the end of the world. The bad will not stamp out the good. The good will not exterminate the bad. They will exist together unto the end. That is the central teaching of the parable of the good seed and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). It teaches believers to wait for God's vindication of righteousness.

The parable of the wheat and the tares is the second agricultural parable recorded in Matthew 13. The first dealt with fruitfulness as represented in different kinds of soil (Matthew 13:3-23). In the first, the seed represented the Word of God, and the soil represented the hearts of men who heard the Word of God. In the second, the seed represented the people of God, and the soil represented the society of men in which believers and non-believers live. Keep the two parables distinct in the study that follows.

I. THE PARABLE, 13:24-30

A certain farmer sowed good seed in his field. He had an enemy who came secretly at night and scattered the seed of tares among the wheat. The plants of the wheat and tares looked so much alike the farmer did not realize what had happened until heads began to form on the plants. Then the tares became evident.

His servants wanted to go into the field and pull up all the tares, but he

forbade them. The wheat would be harmed if they did because the root systems were too closely intertwined, "Wait until the harvest," he advised, "and then we will separate them. I will gather the wheat into my bins and will burn the tares with fire."

There is more involved in the parable than first meets the eye. The tares were not merely weeds. They were a kind of weed, but more than a weed. The grain of the tares was poisonous. A few tare seed in wheat, ground into flour and cooked in bread, would make a person sick. Nausea, vertigo, and serious illness would come when the tares were consumed. Tares among the wheat were not just annoying, as would be the case with weeds; they were very dangerous.

The enemy had done a malicious and potentially harmful thing when he sowed tares among the wheat. The deed could have far-reaching consequences.

It was not possible to remove the tares from among the wheat without damaging the wheat. They must be permitted to grow side by side, though they were so very different, until the harvest came.

II. THE INTERPRETATION

The first lesson on interpreting the parables warned against interpreting a parable as an allegory. In an allegory, every detail has meaning. In a parable, there is one central message, and the details are not stressed. The parable of the wheat and the tares is an exception to that rule. The Lord Jesus interpreted the parable by giving meaning to almost every detail of the parable.

Jesus Christ is the sower who sowed good seed (children of God) in the world (of human society). The devil is the enemy who sowed tares (children of the devil) among the good seed (children of God). The harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels of God. God will send forth His angels to gather the tares (children of the wicked one) from among the wheat (His children) and cast them into a furnace of fire (the lake of fire and brimstone) where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

There are several obvious truths revealed in the parable of the wheat and the tares. (1) God places His people in the world for the purpose of bearing a harvest. (2) Satan tries to counteract the influence of God's people by mixing false professors among them. (3) There will be no distinct separation of the true and the untrue until the end of time. (4) God's children must continue to bear fruit even though the wicked are surrounding them. (5)

The final separation and destruction of the wicked is an act of God. (6) The destruction of the wicked will bring no danger to the people of God since the wheat is gathered into the garner before the tares are burnt with fire. (7) The removal and judgment of the wicked will vindicate the righteous. (8) The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. What encouragement those truths give to the people of God.

III. THE APPLICATION

A. Each Christian is placed in the world for the purpose of bearing fruit to the glory of God.

They are the “**good seed**” which the Lord God has sowed (Matthew 13:24, 38). Like a farmer who invests much money in preparing the seedbed, planting the seed, and cultivating the crop, so God has much invested in the lives of His people. As the farmer plants for the purpose of harvesting, so God expects fruit from each of His children.

You have been placed of God where you can bear fruit. As the farmer knows what kind of soil in which to plant each kind of grain, so God knows where He wants you to grow and bear fruit. That principle is true of every Christian, not preachers and missionaries only. If you are not fruitful where you are (assuming you are in the will of God), you will not be fruitful anywhere else.

What fruit will a Christian produce? He will follow the laws of nature and produce fruit after his kind. As a grain of corn produces corn, and a grain of wheat produces wheat, and cotton seed produces cotton, so the Christian who bears fruit for God will produce other Christians.

The degree of fruitfulness will vary from person to person. Jesus recognized that some would bear a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty (Matthew 13:23), but He also recognized that all who pleased God would bear fruit. Some will bear more fruit than others, but God works in the life of each of His children to produce more and more fruit through them.

Jesus discussed fruitbearing in John 15:1-8. He recognized three states of fruitfulness. (1) Each Christian is to bear some fruit; that is why he was placed in the vine, verse 4. (2) Each Christian is enabled to bear more fruit, verse 2. (3) The Father is glorified when the Christian bears much fruit, verse 8. Each Christian should desire to be fruitful for the Lord.

B. Pretenders who bear bad fruit will grow alongside the real Christian who bears good fruit.

The false person cannot be distinguished from the true until fruit begins to appear. But Satan puts them among true believers in order to hinder the

fruitfulness of the true.

There are unsaved people in every church membership. There was one “**devil**” among the twelve apostles (John 6:70). No one will ever see a perfect church until Jesus returns.

God is not careless toward sin. Judgment will surely come upon the “tares” among God's “wheat.” The time of judgment is not yet. How many innocent people would suffer if God suddenly uprooted all the people whom He knows to be tares. God's mercy delays His judgment until the proper time is come.

Man is not capable of separating the wheat from the tares in this world. That does not mean to say the church should not exercise discipline. Quite the contrary, the church is under strict orders from God concerning her relation toward the brother who walks disorderly: she must withdraw herself from him (II Thessalonians 3:6). Her best efforts will not be sufficient either to cleanse herself absolutely or the society in which she ministers.

A time is coming in which God will present the church to Himself as “**a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish**” (Ephesians 5:27). That time is not yet, though it will come. Until then, let the faithful people of God keep on bearing fruit to the glory of God.

C. A solemn separation is coming in which God will gather in His “wheat” and burn up the “tares” with unquenchable fire.

That time is identified as “the end of the world” (Matthew 13:40-43).

(1) The time of God's judgment is delayed. When the servants asked their master, “Do you want us to pull up the tares?” the master answered, “No, lest you uproot the wheat also. Let both grow together until the harvest.”

The delay does not mean God is careless toward sin. It does not mean He is unconcerned about the harvest. It does not mean He will let the wicked go unpunished. It does not mean He ignores the prayers of His people. The delay is an indication of God's grace toward the faithful people whom He recognizes as His “wheat.”

(2) The time of God's judgment is divinely set. It will come “**in the end of this world**” (Matthew 13:40). The reapers are the angelic servants of God, not mere mortals. There will be no mistake. “**The Lord knoweth them that are his**” (II Timothy 2:19). Judgment is not left in the hands of men. When men try to stamp out the heretics, the terrible Inquisition results. Justice follows the judgment of God, however. Leave judgment to the wisdom of God.

(3) The time of God's judgment will separate the righteous from the

unrighteous. Jesus told of the shepherd separating his sheep from his goats. He spoke of the fisherman drawing his net and separating the good fish from the bad. He spoke of the farmer threshing his wheat and separating the grain from the chaff. Those illustrations foretold the day when God will separate His children from the children of the wicked one.

One of the principles of interpretation of parables is the fact of end stress. That is, the emphasis comes at the end of the parable. The end stress of the parable of the wheat and the tares rests on the certain separation of the saved and the unsaved at the end of the age. Be warned and prepare.