

WHEAT AND THISTLES

Text: Matthew 13: 24-30, 36 - 43

This parable is just one of string of parables Jesus told on the same day - chronicled in Matthew 13

All are connected and most are about farming, seed and fields.

After the first parable(**verse 9**) Jesus asks the question, “*Are you listening, really listening?*”

King James translation puts it this way ... *He that has ears to hear let him hear!*

His disciples who always seem lost asked ... *Why do you tell these stories?*

They probably asked - because no other religious teachers, scholars used parables

Let's pause for a moment and I'll put that to you ...

Are you listening, really listening? Not so much to me but to the Holy Spirit who stands ready to teach any of us with a willingness to listen not just with these (ears) but this(heart).

Matthew 13: 11-15 MSG

¹¹⁻¹⁵ He replied, “You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn’t been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears.

If you’ve ever experienced frustration from a person who just didn’t want to hear it you understand what Jesus is talking about here. This lack of readiness or willingness to listen.

That’s why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight. In their present state they can stare till doomsday and not see it, listen till they’re blue in the face and not get it. I don’t want **Isaiah’s** forecast repeated all over again:

Your ears are open but you don’t hear a thing.

Your eyes are awake but you don’t see a thing.

The people are blockheads!

They stick their fingers in their ears

so they won’t have to listen;

They screw their eyes shut

so they won’t have to look,

so they won't have to deal with me face-to-face
and let me heal them.

Did you get that?!

700 years earlier Isaiah's prophecy was true for the people of his day – and it also true for Jesus' day but Jesus He didn't want that to happen!!!

Jesus didn't use parables to hide or disguise the truth as some scholars believe, He wanted people to understand and receive what God had for them.

How do I know that?

First – Jesus' everyday life was a revelation of the invisible God in human form!

- John called Jesus the WORD of God that became flesh –put on flesh and blood
- He became human in every way - yet still possessed the divine nature and Spirit of God
- He grew up like any other person ... infant to child to boy to teen to adult
- His three year public ministry was about touching, teaching and healing
- Jesus didn't come to hide the truth He came to reveal it!
- Jesus was a living parable!!!

Second- a parable by design is a story used to instruct not confuse

See verses **13: 34, 35**

³⁴⁻³⁵ All Jesus did that day was tell stories—a long storytelling afternoon. His storytelling fulfilled the prophecy:

I will open my mouth and tell stories; I will bring out into the open things hidden since the world's first day.

This parable about the wheat and the thistles just might be the answer to why bad things happen to good people?

Are you listening ... really listening?

In the parable of wheat and thistles Jesus talks about:

Good seed, a farmer, farm workers, an enemy agent and last day judgment.

Matt 13: 24-30

²⁴⁻²⁶ He told another story. “God’s kingdom is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. That night, while his hired men were asleep, his enemy sowed thistles all through the wheat and slipped away before dawn. When the first green shoots appeared and the grain began to form, the thistles showed up, too.

²⁷ “The farmhands came to the farmer and said, ‘Master, that was clean seed you planted, wasn’t it? Where did these thistles come from?’

²⁸ “He answered, ‘Some enemy did this.’

“The farmhands asked, ‘Should we weed out the thistles?’

²⁹⁻³⁰ “He said, ‘No, if you weed the thistles, you’ll pull up the wheat, too. Let them grow together until harvest time. Then I’ll instruct the harvesters to pull up the thistles and tie them in bundles for the fire, then gather the wheat and put it in the barn.’”

Just t identifies who’ who in [verses 36– 43](#)

The Farmer (Is the Son of Man) who plants good seed (wheat) but the same night an enemy under the cover of darkness sewing thistles is the devil (Jesus had a lot to say about him)

As always the enemy(Satan) comes to destroy and kill

The farm workers (Angels) Ask the Farmer - *Should we pull out the thistles?*

The farmer says: ***No- you’ll destroy the entire crop if you do!*** because the roots have become intertwined.

John White writes: We all wish God would remove evil form the world. But put yourself in God’s place for a moment: if by a simple word of power you could snatch evildoers away from earth, what complications might arise from your decision? As one person has said, “If God were to destroy all evil at midnight, who would be left at one o’clock?”

Andy Rooney

We’re all proud of making little mistakes. It gives us the feeling we don’t make any big ones.

⇒ **What is a thistle anyway?** Prickly stemmed plant with poisonous seeds that’s in the daisy family

From the background of wheat and the foreground of thistles – it would be hard to confuse them they look nothing alike but that’s not the case when they begin to grow.



1. Because it was planted the same evening as the wheat: the grow development was the same as the wheat
2. In early growth stages it even looks the same as the wheat
3. As always our spiritual enemy uses deception wanting to make something that is bad appear harmless even good

But the intent is malicious: A clever underhanded action that made the growing environment of the wheat hostile and harmful –

When life goes out of kilter and we complain to God – bring this parable to mind

The problems we experience are not put in our path by God ...but He will use them for our benefit

This week I was thinking of the America I grew up in compared to today’s America and I asked the question – **What happened the heck happened?**

- When did we become afraid to let our children go outside and play?
- When did we start to fear that our child might be shot while attending school?
- When did freedom of expression trump matters of decency and respect?
- When did teaching creation science become an unconstitutional endorsement of religion while requiring schools to teach evolution is not?

The Farmer said an enemy agent is responsible for this mess and he did it while we were asleep disguising what is destructive as good.

Take revisionist history in public education as an example - Until the middle of the 20th century History was taught from a providential viewpoint

George Bancroft:

- Was President Polk’s *Secretary of Navy and War* (Secretary of Defense today) he established the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis
- He wrote the first systematic history for public Education in 1841 and is called the *Father of American History*

- Bancroft held a view shared by many historians: We can never understand history without recognizing that God is at work behind the scenes

When oppressive forces sprout up and take control there is a sudden and often unexplainable change in direction repeats again and again – an event seems to be going in one direction and then suddenly - unexplainably takes a turn to go in a direction we could never have predicted.

Example: Since we are so close to July 4th

There is no way on earth - 13 upstart states with no formal military and virtually no navy could defeat the World Empire of Great Britain! And yet we just celebrated our nations' independence.

Take for instance ...George Washington' Continental army was trapped on Long Island by British General Howe – Washington has been outmaneuvered - nowhere to go.

In war when you have your enemy defeated you bring down the hammer – and end it.

Yet inexplicably, the brilliant British general doesn't. Instead he decides to withdraw and wrap things up in the morning.

But by morning under an incredibly dense fog, Washington evacuates 9,000 American troops using every possible boat they could find. (There's so much more Nor'easter suddenly stopped giving smooth seas for The American army to cross etc.

The way we taught history here in America has been consistent only changing in last the past 50-60 years

Thistles have been planted while we were napping creating a hostile environment in which even the mentioning God's name is offensive.

AC COIL FIASCO

Installation of a completely new Central air AC system – problems right from the start but always excuses by the company that installed

Finally year's later still under manufacture warranty – the installers said the coil was leaking and no longer covered under warranty. It cost \$3,000.00 to purchase and additional to install. Yet after installation the problem showed up again.

They discovered with the help of an independent contractor that they never replaced the defective coil – they kept it for themselves and filled the old unit with leak sealant to temporarily stop the leaks. They have had little success getting satisfaction.

Most of us hate stories like that ... We want to see the bad guys get what they deserve. We want to see the hero arrive in the nick of time and stop:

- the stealing
- the drug trafficking
- the mass shootings
- The internet invasion for control of our children's minds

We want to pull those weeds and thistles out by the roots and watch them wither and die.

Closing

There are moments/seasons in our lives that God calls us to be more than what we are. To do more than what we're doing to understand more than we presently understand.

Depending on how you respond in that moment will make the difference in your life and the people God wants you to touch.

In one of those moments a thought or situation may present itself to you:

- To become a mentor in a boy or girl scout troop
- Lead a Bible study
- Assume a position of leadership at your place of work
- Follow through on an idea for a business or to write a book
- Step up your relationship with your husband or wife
- Be a better father/mother to your children
- Be there when a friend needs you
- Lead your family by example
- Speak to that dejected person who unexpectedly shows up in your path

That's what God called David, Daniel, Ester, Samuel, Mary, Ruth and Joseph to do

It will require sacrifice on your part giving up something to gain something. You'll have to decide what's more important –doing what's comfortable or doing what God asks.

You can change the world or at least one small corner of the world if we are willing to listen and respond in one of those moments.

Are you listening? Really listening?

Let's pray