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Seeds and Weeds; Matt 13:24-30, 36-43
GPBC
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Introduction - Today's text is the 2nd in a string of 7 parables that Jesus tells in Matt 13. While the first parable places the hearts of all mankind into 4 categories based on how we respond to the Word of God, the last 6 parables are various descriptions of the kingdom of heaven. This one begins "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to..." and the rest begin with the words, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." These are simile parables, drawing a point of comparison between stories that portray events that one could easily imagine with the kingdom of heaven which is hard to fathom. So again, the method of teaching in parables takes heavenly, eternal truths and makes them easier to grasp and remember.

The first parable focused on the types of soil while this 2nd parable focuses on the types of plants. The first had to do with the heart. This one concerns the life. The first parable taught that a false faith usually doesn't pass the test of time. This parable teaches that sometimes a false faith is not revealed until the end. Sometimes the false faith keeps up the appearance of true faith right up to the final test. The lesson is this: the ability to keep up the appearance of true faith is still not true faith, and the end, the judgment, will clearly distinguish the appearance of faith from genuine faith. All things will in the end be revealed.

- I. Similarities and their Dangers
 - a. The similarities of good seeds and weeds are many. Both the good seed and the weeds are sown. Both spring up. This particular weed has a similar look of wheat. They grow together in the same field. They occupy the same space. The weeds are allowed to grow alongside the wheat, shoulder to shoulder. They mingle. They both come to maturity. They both last until harvest time. To the untrained eye or from a passing glance, there appears to be no distinction.
 - b. And so it is that the many similarities serve to allow the weed to continue to grow as if it were itself also wheat. It enjoys the benefits of being surrounded by wheat. The similarity is the deception, and therefore, it is the danger as well.

- c. Now Jesus says the kingdom of heaven can be compared to this, and also in His explanation He says that the field is the world. So there are two contexts here that are existing side by side, the world and the people of God who are in the world. I believe what this means is that there is always a mixing of these two contexts in this life. The people of God are in the world but are not of the world, and sometimes people who are truly of the world are thought to also be among the people of God. The mistake occurs because of the similarities that exist between them. And that's the danger, that's the deception. A weed may believe that he is wheat because he looks so much like wheat. Wheat may believe that a weed is wheat because he looks so much like wheat.
 - i. This deception frequently happens in the world. The people of God are to be kind, generous, giving, loving, and friendly. But those qualities are not solely found among God's people. Unbelievers are often some of the most likeable, friendly, charitable people you can meet. And so virtues found among unbelievers is often mistaken by believers as traits of faith, and also mistaken by unbelievers as reason for no concern for God or established religion. After all, I'm just as honest and kind as my neighbor, and I don't go to church or believe the Bible as he does. I'm even more friendly than...
 - ii. This deception frequently happens in the church. This is the pharisee syndrome. The weed reasons, "I have the same morality as Joe. I have the same church membership as Joe. I have the same religious service as Joe. I've gone through the same steps at church as Joe." So both Joe and I are convinced that I'm wheat. We look the same, we talk the same, we sing the same on Sunday. We must be the same, look how similar we are.
 - d. The similarities are dangerously deceptive.
- II. Distinctions and their Warnings
- a. It's the distinctions that must have our attention. Similarities don't really tell us much. Distinctions tell us everything. Distinctions are the proverbial red flags. The similarities can blind us to the distinctions. The similarities can cause us to downplay the distinctions, or

overlook the distinctions, or even dismiss them. But it's the distinctions that clarify the difference between wheat and weeds.

- b. The good seed belong to the Son of Man. The weeds belong to the evil one. The good seed is sown by the Son of Man. The weeds are sown by the evil one. The good seed are the sons and daughters of God. The weeds are sons and daughters of the evil one.
- c. The first distinction is to whom do you belong.
 - i. The good seed belongs to Christ. The good seed has a personal, saving relationship with the heavenly Father through the Son. The good seed knows the Lord, knows that he belongs to the Lord, and rejoices to be counted among those who believe.
 - ii. The weed may be religious, may claim spirituality, may go through religious activity religiously, but the thing he's missing is relationship. He may know of God but he doesn't know God. He mistakes morality for faith, religious practice for faith, good deeds for good standing. But he doesn't have a Father in heaven. He doesn't know Christ as a personal Savior and Lord. Ultimately, the weed believes he belongs to no one, that he is the sole captain of his life.
- d. The second distinction is for whom do you live.
 - i. The good seed, the wheat, loves the Lord. He's a Son. He has a heavenly Father. He loves God and that's why he worships. He loves others because God so loved him and that's why he serves others. That's where his kindness and generosity and comes from. His growth is for the glory of God by the grace of God. God is the center of his world.
 - ii. The weed may acknowledge the Lord, but he doesn't love Him. He goes through the motions of worship to placate God not to adore God. His kindness and his morality come from a sense of what he believes is right and what is wrong, not from a sense of what pleases God and what displeases God. Ultimately, he does what he does for his own benefit. He is the center of his own world.
- e. The third distinction is the presence or absence of genuine fruit.

- i. The wheat, when it comes to maturity, bears grain. The believer when pressed, shows faith in God, rest in God, joy in God, satisfaction in God.
 - ii. The weed can only keep up appearance to a certain point, but in time no fruit, no grain, appears on his stalk. He is empty of genuine faith and love and worship, and eventually the similarities give way to the distinction. If the Spirit never occupied the heart, the fruit of the Spirit never pours out of the life.
- f. The distinctions are the warnings to turn from living your own way, for your own self and truly repent and believe in the Lord. He's the only one who can take a weed and make it wheat. Do you have a heavenly Father? Do you know Christ as Lord and Savior? Do you love God and His Son? At Christmas, do you truly in your heart of hearts celebrate Christ and rejoice in His salvation? Is life about you or is it about Him? Are you trying to convince God of your righteousness or have you embraced Christ and been declared righteous by the Lord? Don't overlook or dismiss those red flags of distinction because the end is coming.

III. The Inevitable End

- a. There is one more similarity between wheat and weeds; they both die. They both stand before God. And that final similarity will also reveal the final distinction.
- b. The wheat is gathered up into the barns of heaven to shine in the presence of God while the weeds are gathered and thrown to the fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- c. The harvest is coming. And all the similarities will fade away and all the distinctions will be made plain. He who has ears, let him hear.

Conclusion