

Introduction

We studied the parable of the wheat and the weeds last week, and the main take away for the follower of Christ is the need to wait for the harvest day. That is when the weeds will be pulled up. That is when the stumbling blocks and lawbreakers will be removed from interfering with the growth of the sons of the kingdom. For now we are intermingled with hostile forces. Christ’s followers face pressure to conform to this world, and even outright persecution. We must endure. We must persevere. The battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil is grueling. Just as plants compete with one another for nutrients and moisture, in the same way that the weeds tangle with the wheat, the world is tangled with us. We would like instant removal and relief. But it is not going to come until it finally comes.

This is the message of Jesus in this parable. The servants reported the presence of weeds in the field. Learning from their master that this was the work of the enemy, they asked if they should go and gather them. “No,” said the master, “let them grow together until the harvest.” At harvest, then, the sons of the devil who break God’s law and put stumbling blocks before his children would receive justice.

Justice can wait because the role of the weeds among the wheat actually has a good effect. The afflictions and trials are tests of faith brought upon the sons of the kingdom. But God uses them for good and causes them to produce steadfastness in his people. At harvest time, the purpose for the trials and temptations brought about by the weeds will be finished. The sons of the evil one will be removed from the midst of the kingdom and will suffer torment under God’s holy justice. This fact is encouragement to us while we remain surrounded by evil and injustice. But there is another corresponding assurance provided in the parable to bolster our hope and sustain our endurance. That’s what we are looking at today.

[Read Text; Pray]

In the parable the master instructed the servants not to gather the weeds now. Rather, he said, "Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." Harvest is a day of two very different destinies. While it is a day of darkness for the sons of the evil one, it is a day of brilliance for the sons of the kingdom. It is the destiny of the sons of the kingdom that we will consider this morning.

First, we must notice . . .

I. The Punctuality of God.

It is expressed in the word THEN in verse 43. "Then the righteous will shine like the sun." This word harkens back to the question of the servants in the parable. When they found weeds growing among the wheat, they had asked if they should at that time gather out the weeds from among the wheat. In their thoughts it would be best for the wheat to grow unrivaled by competition. They wanted the wheat to be its strongest and healthiest.

But the master indicated that the time for the removal of the weeds and the time for the wheat to be at its apex was not to be yet. That would come at the harvest. That is the end of the age. THEN the causes of sin and the breakers of God's law will be taken away and something amazing will happen with the wheat. The Lord God has a plan. And he is right on schedule. Don't let the struggles and the opposition get you down. You may become tired, but do not give up. Because there is a THEN that IS COMING. And it is a day of glory.

II. The Identity of the Sons.

The wheat in the parable are good seed sown by the master. Jesus identifies them as the sons of the kingdom. These are the children of God. And here at the end of the explanation, Jesus refers to them as the righteous. Righteousness is how the sons of the kingdom are identified. Righteousness is at the heart of God's work of salvation. He made Christ to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. This righteousness is put in the account of those who have faith in Jesus. But it is also put into our lives.

We have been saved for the purpose of righteousness. We have been given in Christ a positional righteousness before God by which we might be acceptable to him. But we have also been called to walk in righteousness. We have been set apart for the purpose of glorifying God in the pursuit of ethical holiness. Psalm 119:127-128 express what should be the exclamation of the hearts of all God's people: "I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. . . . I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way."

We have not been saved that we might continue to live in sin with impunity. We have been saved from the penalty and power of sin for the purpose of living in righteousness and godliness. Righteousness shines as light going out from the hearts and lives of followers of Jesus. Jesus tells his followers that we are the light of the world, and we should let our light shine before others so that they may see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven. Paul exhorted the Philippians to live out their godliness that they "may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights."

Professing Christians who live on in the same ungodliness they did before they were converted are no Christians at all. The sons of the kingdom are righteous. They are not perfect. But they love God's commands; they are grieved by their sins; and they fervently pursue holiness. Our Wednesday studies on sanctification have not been as well attended as I had hoped they would. I hope you who could come but choose not to are not satisfied with where you are at in pursuing holiness. This is an imperative study and set of reminders, and I urge you, if you can, to take part.

In the brief time I am preaching this morning, I need to exhort all Christ-followers to pursue righteousness. Let your light shine in this world. Obey Christ. Submit gladly to him every area of your life for his transforming power. Life-change is the fruit that demonstrates you are indeed a son of the kingdom.

III. The Luminosity and the Locality of the Sons.

A. There is great hope of a great day in the future for the sons of the kingdom. Jesus says THEN (IN THAT DAY), the righteous WILL SHINE LIKE THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father.

When Jesus said that we should let our light shine before men in this world, he compared our brightness to a city on a hill. A city situated on a hilltop cannot hide. Against the night sky a soft glow makes the presence of a city apparent. Jesus also compared our brightness to a lamp in a house. All you have to do to hide its brightness is to put it under a bushel basket.

But in THAT day, the brilliance of the righteous will be like the sun! The difference is exponential. The sun is the brightest thing we know. A candle provides about 10 lumens. An incandescent 40 w bulb puts off about 400 lumens. An old 100w bulb provides 1600 lumens. Outdoor sunlight on a sunny may be as many as 6,000 lumens. But the brightness of the sun itself is 10,000 lumens/square foot of sun. that totals 684 times 10 to the 24th power. It's brilliance is so great it is blinding. Yet that is how Jesus says the sons of the kingdom will shine.

B. And the reason they will shine so brightly is twofold. First, all the inhibitors will be removed. All the wicked and law-breakers will be removed from their midst. Revelation 21 makes the point that the wicked will be shut out of the Father's eternal kingdom. V. 27 says, "Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Chapter 22:15 declares that "the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murders and idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" are outside the city of God. The weeds will have been removed. And righteousness can flourish.

Reason number 2 is that the righteous will be face to face with the master of the universe. They will be brought out of the field and into the master's barn. They will be in the kingdom of their Father. The Master of the Universe is their Father. And they shall behold him. And the children will reflect the glory of their Father. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. And when the children of God are welcomed, they look into his face and

they reflect his light. It is the brightness of fellowship and the brightness of purity. So what is this brightness but the brightness of the glory of fellowship with God and the reflection of his beauty.

1 John 3 – See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

When we come to Christ it is because of light. "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And having come to Christ through light, we are being transformed by exposure to the light of his glory. "And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." But here and now we experience the light faintly. "When the perfect comes the partial will pass away. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been known."

When Moses used to go into the tent of meeting and spend time with God his face would literally shine. Time spent with God would cause his countenance to glow. How many lumens could that have been? But in the coming day, the righteous will not merely glow; they will shine bright as the sun because they see God and also because they fellowship with God. Our very beings will overflow with the fullness of the Lord. This is what Paul calls in Ephesians 2:7 "the immeasurable riches of God's grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." To the Corinthians he says this is "an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor 4:17).

Conclusion

I cannot tell you all this means for God's people. But here are three things I can say.

1. Wouldn't you rather shine in the kingdom of God than spend eternity in outside in the unquenchable fire where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth? Jesus came for this purpose. He laid down his life. He took the

wrath of God on himself that all who turn from sin and believe in him might have abundant life in the presence of God. That life begins now and escalates exponentially then. What must you do? You must turn from sin and trust in Jesus. Come to him for forgiveness and come to him for righteousness, and live and shine!

2. If you are believing in Christ, you have this future hope of shining in the kingdom of your Father. This eternal weight of glory helps us see every trial and every affliction and every test for what it is. They seem big and bad and hard to us. But against the backdrop of future glory, they are no more than light and momentary afflictions. We need to be heavenly minded. We need to set our mind on things above. We need to meditate upon God's holiness and gracious purpose so we will have an accurate view of our trials.

3. John speaks of our hope as God's children of being like him and seeing him as he is. And he says, everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. In anticipation of that day when God's children will shine like the sun, let us pursue holiness and purity with urgency, determination, anticipation, and delight.