

Matt 13:24-30, 36-43
"Let the Weeds Grow"

I love the beauty of a manicured lawn. Nice and green, with no weeds. Mulch beds perfectly designed and free of weeds. Every area perfectly edged, and shrubs, trees and bushes perfectly trimmed. The beauty of a perfectly plowed and planted field moves me in the same way. Row after row of crop, free of weeds, growing together in perfect harmony. No doubt it takes effort to achieve such beauty, for which I have first-hand experience having owned several homes. No one likes weeds and there are all sorts of strategies we employ to keep our beautifully manicured lawns, garden beds and fields free from them. We pull them, we spray them, we even cover them. This fact makes what Jesus teaches us via this story counterintuitive. Listen again, **V27-30** "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?" He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.'" They are instructed to let the weeds grow. Counterintuitive, indeed. With this said, I want us to wrestle with three questions raised for me by this familiar story.

First question. Who or what constitutes the Kingdom of Heaven?

Having investigated thoroughly I believe the answer is the church, exclusively. The community of believers, disciples of Jesus Christ who have truly received his message. If Jesus is the one who is planting and he is, **V37**, "He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man""", then we can rightly conclude those that are planted by Jesus constitute the kingdom of heaven here on earth. Those planted by the enemy are those who look the part but

do not possess true faith in Christ. Now, it is equally important that we recognize that the field in which the “sons of the kingdom”, as Jesus describes those who are planted by him in **V38**, are planted in the world. Those planted by Christ are not separated from the world and once they mature, they become distinctly recognizable from those who are planted by the devil. Are we wheat or are we tare? It is extremely important that we know. The good news is we can know.

Matt 4:17 ¹⁷ “From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”

Matt 7:21-23 ²¹ “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²² On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ ²³ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.”

Romans 10:9-13 ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Second question. Why the prohibition against pulling the weeds?

Two reasons. The primary reason is that responsibility belongs to Jesus Christ and his angels at the end of the age. **V39-40** ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore as the tares are gathered and

burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.” Secondary reason, but just as important, wheat and tare are indistinguishable until the head of the plant matures. Not only, that they grow in close proximity. Any person skilled in yard work understands the risk of pulling up the good with the bad because the roots are often entangled. Practically speaking, one cannot be both the planter and the gardener. No flower bed prunes itself. No mulch bed pulls its own weeds. Only the gardener can do such work because of his or her vantage point. Here is the hard application, we do not have the capacity to maintain a community free of tares nor is it our primary responsibility. The tare will be addressed by Jesus and his angels when that time comes. We must be at peace with the fact there will be operatives of the enemy amongst the fold until the day of harvest. Stop being so bothered by those who live in ways that you do not agree with. Stop attempting to determine who is in or out. Stop looking for a perfect church! “Are you wheat?”, is the question each of us should be attending to. Not whether your neighbor is wheat, but you.

Matt 25:31-34, 41 ³¹ “But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. ³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ⁴¹ “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.”

Romans 14:11-13 “For the Scriptures say, “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.’” ¹²Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. ¹³So let’s stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.”

Third and final question. Does this mean we should let anything go in the Church and/or the world? The short answer is no. Disciples must hold one another accountable, **Matt 18**. When we are in blatant disobedience to the teachings of Christ, we should administer ecclesiastical discipline, **1 Cor 5**. We must measure the message of those who stand behind this sacred desk for accuracy, **2 Cor 11**. We must assess the fruit we are bearing. Whether it is good or bad. We must be on the lookout for wolves in sheep’s clothing always, **Matt 7**. We must, also, accept the fact that there will always be evil amongst the good. That those of the world will never be pro-Christ or God, **James 4**. And we should not lose heart due to this fact because Jesus makes clear that a reckoning is coming, and evil will be dealt with once and for all, **V40-43, listen**, “⁴⁰Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴²and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” In the interim, let the weeds grow. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.