

The Kingdom: Living Within: Part 10

Last week we finished the parable of *The Sower and the Seed*, and it was a powerful introduction to a string of parables in **Matthew 13** Jesus uses to explain the Kingdom of Heaven. The next parable is *The Wheat and the Tares* and similar to the first parable, Jesus explains it in detail so we can continue to train our minds to think within the context of the Kingdom of Heaven. His goal is for us to see life and even time, as we know it, through the lens of the Kingdom versus through the lens of the world and our humanity. Let's explore what He wants us to know through this next parable of *The Wheat and the Tares*.

Matthew 13:24–30

Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' "But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat

into my barn.” ’ ’ ”

Matthew 13:36–43

Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” And He said, “**The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. “So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.**

In this parable, Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a man who sowed good seed in his field. Graciously, He gives us straightforward definitions to sort through the different elements of the metaphor. Let’s review those definitions: 1) The man sowing the good seed is Jesus the “Son of Man” (just like he was the Sower in the parable of *The Sower and the Seed*); 2) The enemy is the Devil; 3) The good seeds are the sons of the Kingdom; 4) The tares are the sons of the evil one; 5) The field is the world and belongs to God; 6) The reapers are God’s angels, and; 7) The

harvest is the end of the age.

Right off the bat, the most noticeable thing about this parable is the very intense ending that sets forth some harsh realities about what happens during the “end of the age.” The “end of the age” is a reference to the changing of the world as we understand and know it. According to scripture, this end will signal the return of Christ, the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ, the Great White Throne Judgment, and the eternal demise for those who opposed God and the eternal glory for those who belong to Him (***Revelation 19:17-20:15***). The parable itself is pointing to that moment where the choice that man makes to either serve God or serve the Devil comes to a head and man is finally judged. It’s important to note that when it comes to talking about the end times there are many details and layers that are quite involved (after all it took us over a year to study the book of ***Revelation***), but regardless of the details, the Bible is very clear that the “end of the age” is coming sooner than later; and it will be a separation of those who believe and behave as if Jesus Christ is Lord and those who do not. The reality that life on this earth is going to eventually change and rotate around the Kingship of Jesus, versus the kingdom of the Enemy is no secret. Jesus references the end times frequently throughout the gospels. Paul references it in his letters to Timothy (***1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-17***), in ***Thessalonians 4*** when he discusses the resurrection of believers, and in ***Philippians 2:9-11*** when he discusses that every knee will bow and tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The end times are also mentioned in ***1 John 2:18, 1 Peter 4:7, 2 Peter 3:3-4,13*** and many of the other prophetic books of the Bible such as in ***Daniel 12***. Lastly, I should again mention the book of ***Revelation*** which we have studied in the greatest of detail and which

explains that this time IS coming and is a part of God's plan to conform us into His image and bring His Kingdom to its fullest fruition on earth as it is in heaven. To bring this opening thought together, let's look a little deeper into ***Daniel 12***, one of the passages referenced in ***Matthew 13:43***.

Daniel 12:1-3,10

Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.

This separating of the righteous and the wicked sounds a lot like the separation of the tares who are gathered and burned versus the wheat who are placed in the farmer's barn. So the Bible is not shy about this topic at all; and this is definitely coming in the future. This verse in ***Daniel*** speaks about Michael the arch-angel "arising" or moving out of the way and essentially the protection he provides over the people of God with his presence goes with him as he moves. This allows great distress to fall on people during the end times, and a huge piece of this is because

the Beast (the demonic spirit which possesses the man we call the Antichrist) is going to demand that people choose who they are going to serve one way or the other. But as this verse states that every person whose name is written down as belonging to the Lord (because they have believed in and confessed His Name) will rise up in “everlasting light and grace as they shine like the stars forever.” This is in alignment with what Jesus says in the parable about the wheat in verse **43**, “The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” So this time is coming and it will be a great separation between men and that is an unchangeable fact.

Regardless of this reality being an unchangeable fact, the intensity of the “end of the age” can come across as very intimidating, especially in the face of our day-to-day wrong belief and unbelief about God. Before we know it, our fickle minds are again whispering to us that God is scary and unpredictable, because we start to feel fearful towards Him about what the future holds for us. But keep in mind, the Bible is clear that there is a pathway we can choose to walk whereby our entrance into the Kingdom is more than abundantly supplied to us (**2 Peter 1:11**). Thus, you should set your mind on that path and be busy about the Kingdom of Your Father versus being locked down in fear of future judgment as presented in this parable.

I do not believe that causing you to worry about going to the barn to burn is His main objective in telling this parable. You see, back when He was saying these things He was speaking to people who were just starting to understand and follow Him in His ministry. These people were literally just starting to live out a brand new kind of faith Jesus offered to them with His presence and death on the cross. As they began to move forward in their spiritual development, they (unlike their

forefathers) would have the implications and the mercy of the cross covering their lives, they would have the resource of the Holy Spirit living in their bodies guiding them, and they would have the new capacity to have a heavenly perspective seeing with eyes of the Kingdom of Heaven versus eyes of this world. At this point they were unlike any of God's people that had ever lived before. So with all of that in mind, Jesus is definitely communicating what will happen in the future but even more so, I believe He is communicating what they, and by association what we as believers, are to be concerning our time with between now and the coming of the end. Remember, Jesus changed everything when He brought the Kingdom of Heaven to earth and in His coming He fulfilled prophecy that advanced time and humanity even closer to the end; but, obviously, it has not yet arrived so there is definitely work left for us to do.

Still, He came to stand in the gap of separation between us and God and this period of time between the cross and the end of ages is a critical stage for us to seek out and establish what we believe as we grow in the field. This period of time is also the context in which Jesus is addressing His followers within this parable of *The Wheat and the Tares*. So let's look at this parable from the perspective that it is about what we are supposed to be doing in this interim before "the end of ages" versus about if we were born a wheat seed or a tare seed.

In **Matthew 13:24-26,38** Jesus explains when it comes to the field (a metaphor for the world), sons of the Kingdom are "planted" by Him and sons of the evil one are "planted" by the Devil. In essence, the Devil sneaked in when everyone was busy with their tasks and planted his own seeds. Much to the consternation of Jesus' workers, the Devil's seeds are planted in the same field intermingled

together with Jesus' seeds. Now this might sound like some earth shattering tragedy that would have never happened if the proper security was set forth to keep watch over the field, but when it comes to the coexisting realms of the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of the world, it is completely expected.

Remember in Steve's teaching *Faith Hope and Love Part 7* (yes the famous 539/540 teaching) he explained the following: "From the broadest perspective, there are only two groups of humanity: those chosen (the **Beloved**) and those not chosen. The not chosen however fall into two categories: 1) the many who have been "called" (whose names can be erased from the Lambs book of life— **Revelation 3:5**); and 2) those who have always belonged to the evil one whose names were never written in the Lambs book of life (**Revelation 13:8; Romans 9:1-24**). The difference between the "called" and those who have always belonged to the evil one, is that the "called" will have a chance to reject the Beast, not take the mark of His name, and endure through the end of the Tribulation in hope of entering into the Millennial Kingdom which will be ruled by Christ and His **Beloved**. It is a long path and one you don't want to make. Whereas, those who have belonged to the evil one will die with the evil one."

This reminder simply supports the idea that the intermingling of the wheat and the tares is not so odd or strange after all. We are not as segregated as we would like to think; and it is part of how the kingdoms coexist and function along side of each other until the events of the "end of age" change that dynamic. The enemy is so clever in terms of how he has wiggled in to weave corruption into every movement of God. Just look at the practical examples of how the Devil has twisted marriage, man as the authoritative head, and even sex and sexuality. There is not

going to be any area that is not co-mingled. So the fact that the wheat and the tares are planted side by side and the good and evil are operating so close to each other is actually how things work between the kingdoms and are not just some kind of anomaly.

Let's keep that reality of who is in the field in mind and continue working through the parable. Next, we see the workers come to report to Jesus that His field has had bad seed sown in with the good seed and they ask Him if they should go and pull out the weeds. Jesus says "No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them." I believe Jesus' response to pulling up the tares is the main objective of this parable. Jesus does not want the tares to be pulled out of the ground because it will uproot the wheat.

So what is going on here and why wouldn't Jesus want them to remove the weeds? First I'd like to discuss what it means to uproot wheat. Basically, it means to almost kill it—remove stability from its foundation. Often the plant isn't able to stand up any longer leaving the prematurely developed buds laying on the ground where moisture puddles and pests wait. Plant roots growing in close proximity are usually knotted together underground and when surrounding plants are disturbed the roots rip and disconnect from the more established roots in the soil cutting off access to moisture and nutrients. So disturbing the soil is not a good way to take care of crops.

This concept of uprooting applies to us practically as well, and we respond to it similar as a plant. The most tangible example I have to represent a person who is uprooted is people I work with who are trying to recover from the confusion and disillusionment of the religion of Christianity and the way they have been judged,

alienated, and harshly treated by those who were otherwise supposed to have cared and loved them. Even worse, they are often trying to recover from this disillusionment while they are ALSO trying, at the same time, to take in the pure truth of the Word of God.

What I notice in these people is that they are tired, out of energy, hopeless, cynical and for all intents and purposes ready to put God on the shelf for a while because quite frankly they are sick of Him. They can't sort out who He is and who He isn't, and they have so many voices, special verses, and religious threats running through their heads that they are just exhausted. Now what they are really sick of is the corrupt and false demonic god of religion with whom they have been interacting; but honestly, there is a piece of humanity that seems like it can't help but just be jaded toward God. This produces all sorts of behavior and reaction that uses up any energy that could be used to believe truth so healing can happen.

In general, humans don't do very well being uprooted. A sleuth of coping mechanisms and bad habits are formed because of these "uprootings" and people begin to calculate that they will "never do this again," "never try that again," and worse just believe that God isn't the answer for them. On a practical level I could write a book about all the things some of you absolutely would not even consider doing because of your own uprooting experiences. Some of you wouldn't even wear a pretty shirt or do your hair. Many of you had entirely lost sight of the reality that God cares. Several of you had so much resentment built up toward Jesus who has been the only person in your life that ever DID have your best interest in mind the whole time. This was all because being uprooted by the very people you trusted is violent and harsh. God knows that He already has to do so much breaking and

bending of us to bring us to Him in the first place, He doesn't want us doing it to each other as well. We simply don't know what we are doing; and, honestly, being uprooted can have some very serious and long lasting affects on a person. This is the saddest part of my job as I have worked with so many people that in their innocence to find answers just wanted Jesus, but instead they got religion and it created major damage that has taken years of consistent repetition of truth to correct. So Jesus says, "No, do not pull out the tares because it will uproot the wheat." And He makes the appropriate judgment because being uprooted is dangerous and few survive. Consider this verse in Jude.

Jude 11–12

What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion. When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots.

Speaking of being uprooted, we studied the book of ***Jude*** just before our study of Revelation and we intensely studied Cain, Balaam, and Korah—all of whom had full knowledge of and access to God. Yet, these three men are described as

“uprooted.” The verse says “they are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots.” Even though they had full knowledge and access to God they still chose to walk away from Him. Uprooting does damage; and Jesus, as usual, shows an incredible amount of wisdom and understanding of His creation as He instructs His workers to not pull the tares because the damage to the wheat could be irrecoverable.

As for the workers, of course they mean well and probably think that they are fighting for their Master (remember, **John 16:2** says that people will even persecute and kill the Beloved thinking they are doing a holy service to God), but the hard reality that we must remember every single day is that God’s ways are NOT our ways. Similar to the workers, our focus as humans and religious humans no less, tend to be to judge and cleanse. In our paradigm the good people belong with “good people” and the same goes for the bad people—they belong with the “bad people.” We use this mentality to quarantine and validate ourselves, take action that makes us feel like we are fighting for God, but Jesus tells the workers to NOT take this action against the tares because it hurts the wheat and that is TRUE.

As a side note, we need to always be cognizant that no one is immune to becoming religious even if it is only in a singular or specific area of your life. We must always be evaluating ourselves as Paul instructs in **Romans 12:3** and be sure that we continually bring a teachable heart and a humble willingness to change to the very front of our motivations before we do anything. We are not so special here in this body that a legalistic heart of religion has stopped hunting for us. It helps, of course, that we talk about it all the time; but look at the centuries and centuries of spiritual movements that have started out so strong and pure only to morph into

spiritual burdens with each passing generation. We must not let religion creep in and control how we deal with others.

When it comes to the wheat and the tares, first and foremost, we have NO idea who is who. We don't know because wheat and tares look similar as they grow. There is no way for us to know who is a child of the King and who is a child of the enemy until the harvest. We also don't know because it is not our job or position to know, and even if we did, this parable (and several other verses in the Bible) clearly state that we are NOT in charge of the harvest AT ALL. Who are we to judge? Who? Jesus clearly states in **Matthew 13:39** that the reapers are His servants the angels. We are planted, grown and gathered up, but we DO NOT reap the harvest. There is only one Judge and it is the Lord Jesus Christ. And thank God for that reality. Thank God—for the hands of men have only slightly judged me, even “righteous men” have only slightly judged me, and even though it was slight it was also heartbreaking and sought to separate me from my faith just like Jesus knew it would.

Look at this scripture written by Paul in **Corinthians**.

1 Corinthians 4:3–5

As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point. My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide. So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our

private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.

So if we are not to be uprooting what then is our role? How are we to handle ourselves growing up next to wheat or tares? I believe our role is to be focused on how WE are living now and be confident that we know, not where everyone else stands, but where we stand. There is only one person you can clearly look at and, if you're honest, give a valid judgment on—yourself. Where do you stand in fulfilling this role? Many of you may not even be able to answer that question because you may not be confident about your status in the field. You may be very confident that you are called but not too confident that you are chosen. We briefly touched on the concept of being called and being chosen when we were talking earlier about the “end of the age” and in that same teaching of Steve's that I referenced before, he took a lot of time explaining that the “called” are actually divided into two groups: the “chosen” and those who just remain “called” and never actually respond. This is another Biblical reality that yes, you must consider if you are going to walk in the truth of the Word of God; but let me explain the situation as it relates to the field of wheat and tares.

Matthew 13:38 states that the good seed are the sons of the Kingdom and the tares are the sons of the evil one. Upon looking deeper into these statements of identity, I noticed that they are in the *present active indicative*. This means it describes how the wheat and the tares are currently living here and now. This brings hope because if these statements of identity were in the *perfect active indicative* versus the *present* it would mean that their current condition was also their fate. But it isn't their fate and it isn't your fate if you will take up your role to

(as Steve put it) “secure your entry to the Kingdom.” If you’re not sure where you stand you still have a choice and if you behave as if the enemy planted you, you don’t have to just resign yourself to being a son of the Devil. You can choose to change. That choice is never taken from you.

Besides, we must remember that we are ALL born into sin and are slaves of the enemy until we surrender ourselves over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ so even if you have done it like a tare it is not too late to join the wheat. In fact, this reminds me of an excerpt from that same teaching of Steve’s where he states, “Still in some strange and undeniable way, your response to having been chosen is a part of being chosen. God choose you, but you still need to respond to His call which demands a response of faith. No matter where you turn in the Bible you cannot escape the baffling intersection between God’s choosing and man’s need to actively respond to having been chosen.” This also reminds me of our discussions in this Parable series on the two way street of relationship with God where “He grants and we know.” In addition, the Word makes it clear that if people are chosen, then they will follow.

So how do we take up our role in the field and secure our entry into the barn by following? We live like citizens of the Kingdom. In Part 1 of this series on *Living Within the Kingdom*, Steve taught on this concept of being assured of your entry. He explained that the Kingdom belongs to: 1) Those who do the will of the Father; 2) Those who live by faith; 3) Those who are poor in Spirit; and 4) Those who are converted by God and choose, as a matter of lifestyle, to approach Him as a child. He states that it is realistic that as we falter with unbelief and wrong belief we get confused as to whether or not we have entered the Kingdom. This brought us to a

key passage in **2 Peter 1:1-11** where Steve discussed the qualities of “applying all diligence to faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.” He explained these as a progressive development of spiritual maturity where the Kingdom of God comes to dominate ones heart, mind, soul, and strength. Finally, he stated that this passage is the ultimate declaration of our reciprocal responsibility in our relationship with God and that if we now and continually practice these things, or apply our faith in this manner, the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will happen.

The point I am trying to make here is that we can fulfill our role and be confident that we are wheat if we are diligent and care about the things a child of God cares about. In this way entrance into the Kingdom of God will be more than abundantly supplied to us. In identifying with the wheat, we can be sure of ourselves; but, going back to the metaphor of the field, we cannot impose that on (or drive it toward) anyone else in an attempt to specify who is wheat and who isn't. Our job is to be focusing on our position in the field by securing our entry by practicing those four things we listed above.

With regard to this, there is a very interesting verse in **Matthew 11:12** that states “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.” There is a similar verse in **Luke 11:11** stating, “The Law and the Prophets *were proclaimed* until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.” When I looked into the meanings behind these verses I found that “violence” and “force” mean to “seek for with the most ardent zeal and intense

exertion.” It is our job to take the Kingdom of Heaven by force with ardent zeal and intense exertion. So this is an intentional movement to obtain and partake of what is rightfully ours while violently evicting the enemy who has squatted within the territory of our soul. Besides, that is how you can help others find the Lord anyway, by allowing His truth and peace into your life so that it emanates so strongly from your being that others simply want to know what you have so they can have it too. That goes much farther than uprooting someone.

Another thing that we need to be aware of as a church fellowship and as part of the world (the field) is that we at Pathway will also have the presence of wheat and tares. It would be not only arrogant but also naive to think that this applies to everyone else but us. Jesus wants us to really understand how the kingdoms coexist. There are tares and wheat within the body of believers both globally and intimately. Remember, however, that judging or labeling others is not to be our concern or our responsibility.

In **Matthew 13:41-42** Jesus says that the angels are the ones who “will gather out of His Kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire” where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In **Matthew 18:7** Jesus says, “**Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!**” So these stumbling blocks are basically people who mess other people up and cause them to ignore or turn away from God with their distractions and worthless entertainment. Likewise, **2 Corinthians 6:14** says, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” So

these people who commit lawlessness are those who refuse to believe. Both of these types will be thrown into the furnace of fire, but again that is not our concern unless you are fearful of the furnace.

Our concern is to secure our entry and be citizens of the Kingdom no matter what the person beside us is doing. And of course no matter who we are interacting with, it is always our responsibility to encourage people to trust and believe in Christ no matter who they are or who they end up to be at the “end of the age.” Jesus even spoke the truth to Satan in all of their interactions and it is not our right to decide who should hear what. That is why we always remind each other to speak the truth in love. Not because it will be what people will want to hear or because they will even care about what you are saying, but because it is what we are called by our Master to do.

In conclusion, I truly do believe that Jesus put this parable in here so that we would understand more about what we are to be doing and what we are not to be doing in this period of time between the cross and the “end of the age.” In this parable we also learn more details about the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven with regard to how we are to interact with people with whom we are sharing this life journey. How wonderful it would be if the field was chocked full of wheat and everyone were assured of his or her entry. But it is simply a reality that not everyone does the will of the Father, lives by faith, is poor in spirit or approaches the Lord as a child; so there will be tares. The fruits of one securing their entry to the Kingdom are uncompromising and God doesn't bend or break His plans to circumstances or difference of opinion. Remember, in **Matthew 7:21** we are told, “Not everyone who says Lord Lord enters the Kingdom, but he who does the will of

the Father will enter.” However, **John 6:40** states, “everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” Similarly as I stated earlier in **Matthew 13:43** Jesus tells us, “the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

He who has ears, let him hear.

Let's Pray