

Introduction

Jesus tells a parable about a farmer who plants good seed in his field. While everyone is sleeping, an enemy comes and plants weeds among the wheat. When the plants begin to grow, the servants notice the weeds and want to pull them up. The farmer tells them to wait because pulling up the weeds too soon might damage the wheat.

This parable helps us understand why good and evil often seem to grow side by side in the world. Jesus does not pretend evil is harmless or unreal. He names it clearly. There is an enemy. There are weeds. There is harm in the field. But Jesus also teaches that God’s patience is not weakness. God sees what is happening, and God will bring justice in His time.

The parable reminds us that final judgment belongs to God. We can name evil, resist sin, protect the vulnerable, and seek justice, but we are not wise enough to decide every person’s final spiritual condition. God’s people are called to grow faithfully where they are planted and trust God with the harvest.

Background

Matthew 13 is a chapter full of parables about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus uses of parables about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus uses everyday images like seeds, soil, weeds, yeast, treasure, pearls, and fishing nets to teach deep truths about God’s kingdom.

This parable comes after the parable of the sower. In the parable of the sower, Jesus teaches about how different hearts receive God’s word. In the parable of the wheat and weeds, Jesus looks at the bigger picture. The whole world is like a field where God’s kingdom is growing, even while evil still works against it.

Verse-by-Verse Handout

Scripture Section	Main Meaning	Details That Are Easy to Miss
Matthew 13:24	Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.	The field belongs to the farmer. Evil may appear in the field, but it does not own the field.
Matthew 13:25	While everyone was sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat.	The enemy works secretly. Evil often begins in hidden ways before its results become visible.
Matthew 13:26	When the wheat grew and formed heads, the weeds also appeared.	The weeds were likely a plant that looked very much like wheat at first. That helps explain why pulling them early would be dangerous.
Matthew 13:27	The servants ask where the weeds came from since the farmer planted good seed.	Their question sounds like a question many people still ask: If God is good, why is there evil in the world?
Matthew 13:28	The farmer says, “An enemy did this.” The servants ask if they should pull the weeds up.	Jesus does not blame the farmer for the weeds. Evil comes from opposition to God’s good work.
Matthew 13:29	The farmer says not to pull the weeds because the wheat may be uprooted too.	This is a warning against reckless judgment. Sometimes our eagerness to fix everything can cause more harm.
Matthew 13:30	The farmer says both should grow until the harvest. Then the weeds will be burned, and the wheat will be gathered into the barn.	Judgment is delayed, but it is not canceled. God’s patience gives time for mercy, repentance, and growth.
Matthew 13:36	The disciples ask Jesus to explain the parable.	Even faithful disciples need help understanding Jesus’ teaching. Asking questions is part of discipleship.
Matthew 13:37	Jesus says the one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.	Jesus Himself is the sower. The good seed begins with His work, not ours.
Matthew 13:38	The field is the world. The good seed represents the children of the kingdom, and	The field is not only the Church. Jesus is talking about the whole world.

the weeds represent the children of the evil one.

Matthew 13:39	The enemy is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.	Human beings are not the final harvesters. God gives that work to His angels at the end of the age.
Matthew 13:40–42	At the end of the age, evil will be gathered and removed.	God’s judgment means evil will not get the last word. Abuse, injustice, and sin will not last forever.
Matthew 13:43	The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.	The parable ends with hope, not fear. God’s people will be gathered, healed, and made radiant by His grace.

Wesleyan Emphasis

This parable shows the patience and mercy of God. God does not rush to destroy. God gives time for grace to work. That matters because all of us need mercy. None of us would want God to judge us only by our worst season.

Wesleyan theology reminds us that grace is always working. Prevenient grace calls us before we even know how to respond. Justifying grace forgives and restores us through faith in Christ. Sanctifying grace keeps shaping us into people who look more like Jesus.

The wheat is not called to become weeds in order to survive. God’s people are called to grow faithfully, even in a mixed and troubled world.

Main Lessons

God is good, even when the field is mixed.

Evil is real, but it does not own the world.

God’s patience is mercy, not weakness.

Final judgment belongs to God.

Christians are called to grow faithfully, not judge recklessly.

The harvest will come, and God will set things right.

The parable ends with hope: God’s people will shine in the kingdom of their Father.

Discussion Questions

Why do you think the servants wanted to pull the weeds up immediately?

What are some dangers of judging people too quickly?

How does this parable help us understand why God sometimes seems slow to act?

What does it mean to “grow as wheat” in today’s world?

How can Christians resist evil without becoming harsh or self-righteous?

Where do you need to trust God with the harvest?

Application

We live in a world where good and evil often grow side by side. That can be frustrating, painful, and confusing.

We want God to fix everything right now. We want the weeds gone. We want the field cleaned up.

Jesus teaches us to trust the Farmer.

God sees clearly. God knows what is wheat and what is weed. God knows how to protect what He is growing.

Our calling is to stay rooted in Christ, bear good fruit, practice mercy, resist evil, protect those who are being harmed, and trust God with what only God can do.

The good news is that the field still belongs to God. The harvest is coming. Evil will not last forever. In the kingdom of the Father, the righteous will shine like the sun.