
When evidence seems to suggest, “Jesus isn’t the Christ; part 2

Matthew 13

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Introduction (Recap this morning’s message with figure #1)

Tonight we will continue our 2-part series called *When evidence seems to suggest, “Jesus is not the Christ”* by looking at the six remaining parables. What we want to come away with is a sense of what is true for the people of God living between Christ’s first coming and His second coming. And this sense will help shape our expectations and will provide motivation for ongoing obedience.

What we find in these six parables are two themes (or better put: an intertwined twin theme). We will notice much opposition as we saw in the morning’s message. We will see, however, that in spite of the opposition there will be growth in and for God’s people. And that this growth will be quite impressive in the end.

We will also observe the value of the Kingdom. We will see the infinite value of Christ’s absolute authority. And we will take note that though there is much suffering in the kingdom of heaven, the sacrifices are not worthy to be compared to the inestimable value of Christ Himself.

We will begin our study tonight by looking at the first theme.

The First Theme

v.24-43,47-50

The first group of parables that make up this one theme are made up of four parables. They are the weeds, mustard seed, leaven and the net. Taken together these four make up one theme that is to motivate us to carry out the basic responsibilities we saw this morning.

The parable of the weeds

v.24-30, 36-43

Jesus left the crowds and then explained this parable to his disciples. Notice a couple of things in the story: 1) Its elements 2) Its conflict 3) Its ending

Elements of the story

First notice the elements of the story. The story has two sowers, two types of seed, one field, servants of the master, reapers and a dramatic ending depicting two contrasting destinations.

He identifies the one who sows good seed as himself; the Son of Man. Here we notice the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. He is the one who brings forth spiritual life (note that the good seed is identified as “children of the kingdom”). He is the one who decides where God’s people will live on the earth (note v.37-38 and how Jesus scatters his people throughout the earth). Notice also that Jesus is the possessor of everything. It is his barn (30), his field (24), his angels (41) and his kingdom (41). These observations point us to the conclusion that Jesus has ultimate authority. What we live in is his kingdom with all its perplexities and problems and persecutions. He possesses all. He decides for us all. This is to give us much motivation to carry out basic responsibilities in his kingdom.

Conflict in the story

But we must be aware of the environment in which Christ's people are planted and grow. The second sower is known as the devil. He has his people that he scatters around where God's people are growing. His aim is to choke out Christ's people because he is in warfare with Christ (v.25). The devil hates Jesus Christ. This tale of two seeds is nothing new. We are introduced to it back in Genesis 3:15. "I will put enmity between you and the women and between your offspring and her offspring". Paul picks up on this war between Christ's seed (i.e. the church) and Satan's seed in Galatians. He says in 4:29 "But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, *so also it is now*". The analogy not only talks about the way the two kinds of seeds are born, but also in the way the one kind treats the other. In the days of Abraham the fleshly seed persecuted the spiritual (Gen.21:9). The text says that this type of persecution continues even NOW.

Its Ending

Lest we lose heart and discontinue listening to and speaking about Jesus Christ, the parable depicts the two destinations of the two types of seeds. For the enemy's seed there is an awful outlook. The Bible says that "Christ's angels will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and throw them into the fiery furnace...there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth". The parable continues by depicting where the good seed will eventually end up. "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father". Here God's people have an awesome prospect!

Christ's people were not to worry about the ambiguity in the kingdom. They were not to concern themselves with attempting to create a pure society. They were simply to obey Christ, preach and counsel the Word and trust Christ with the results. There will be trouble in the visible Church. There are hypocrites in the visible Church. There needs to be biblical discipline. But at the end of the day, only Christ knows whose are his and whose are the devils. We are to continue upholding the two basic responsibilities as seen this morning; obeying the Word & conveying the Word.

The other 3 parables

The other three parables found in this theme are the mustard seed, the leaven and the net. The parable of the net is most similar to the parable of the weeds and so I'll leave that to another time.

The mustard seed and the leaven complete the shaping of theme #1. These parables communicate that the kingdom, in some sense, was not going to make a dynamic entrance. Rather, it would grow from very small roots. But wherever the king was, there his kingdom was too. This kingdom began in the hearts of his disciples (as seen in the parable of the sower). It was to grow until the end of the age (v.39).

This insight is preserved for us to encourage us in obedience to the King. First notice that the kingdom will grow. Expansively, according to the mustard seed and intensively, according to the leaven. It will eventually permeate both the entire world and our entire hearts. It will penetrate the hostile East and the docile West. It will fill the entire Earth as the waters cover the sea. Its branches will extend to China and India and Iran. It will pro-

vide shade and support for all of God's people. This kingdom is an extensive and productive Kingdom.

It also will permeate quietly and at times unnoticeably. It will work through our hearts changing them into the bread of God for worship and ministry.

The point is that all of this comes from humble beginnings in spite of much opposition and will enjoy a splendid ending.

The First Theme therefore...

To bundle these four parables together, we can see that

1. The Kingdom will grow in spite of much opposition
2. The Kingdom will grow from humble beginnings.
3. The Kingdom will climax with justice and splendor.

These types of observations are to encourage us to continue doing two things; listening carefully to the Christ and speaking accurately about the Christ. And this is to be done until he comes.

The Second Theme

Moving to the second of the two themes, we come to the parables of the treasure and pearl. Picking up in v.44-46 follow along as I read.

Its elements

What makes up these parables are a few elements. We see in both a person finding a great treasure. In the first it appears that he simply happened upon the treasure. In the second, the merchant was hunting for the treasure. The obvious point in both parables is what they did when they possessed the treasure.

Its point

When they found the treasure and the pearl they are seen as utterly exuberant and out of this joy they sell all they have to acquire the treasure.

These parables shape the picture of the Kingdom for us in this regard. There is sacrifice in the Kingdom. Anyone who enters the Kingdom by faith will be required to sacrifice everything for the King. But notice what motivated the man who found the treasure to sell all he had. The text says, "from his joy he went and sold...". This means that the power of joy over the treasure was strong enough to cause him to sacrifice everything in order to possess the treasure.

What this means for us is immense. The second theme these parables are conveying has to do with the kingdom's value. We are to see Jesus' ultimate authority over our lives as inestimable worth. To possess it and enjoy it is infinitely more valuable than anything we possess on earth (houses and homes, cars and computers, families and fortunes, vacations and careers; whatever the world would say "this is the most precious thing in this world"). When He grants us eyes to see and ears to hear we will be like these parables. Sacrifice will be our joy. Giving up the lesser things to enjoy the greater things will be not a burden for those in the Kingdom.

The Second Theme therefore...

To bundle these two parables together we can see that:

1. The Kingdom has inestimable value.
2. We should enter into it at all cost.
3. When Jesus is our only possession, giving becomes a delight (M.Card).

10 lessons out of 2 messages

1. We live in the Kingdom today.
2. This Kingdom is in a warzone where good and bad occur.
3. The enemy of the King desires to destroy the King's people.
4. The strategy of the enemy is cunning and catastrophic.
5. The Kingdom's King is Jesus who is supreme and sufficient.
6. His people listen to and speak about Him always.
7. His people can expect to sacrifice and suffer with joy.
8. His people can also expect to grow and be productive.
9. His people must be vigilant of the schemes of the devil.
10. His people will persevere knowing that in the end it will be just and marvelous.

Conclusion

(Slide below summarizes Matthew 13 and our 2-part series for 7/22)

