

The Triumph of Jesus Over the Enemy

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Scriptural Text: Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43, ESV

In the study of the parables of Jesus, in Matthew 13, we find seven parables. The parable we will be studying describes the triumph of Jesus over the influence over the enemy.

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, *"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,"* ²⁵ *but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.* ²⁶ *So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.* ²⁷ *And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?'* ²⁸ *He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.'* *So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'* ²⁹ *But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.'* ³⁰ *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.'"*

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." ³⁷ He answered, *"The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man."* ³⁸ *The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,* ³⁹ *and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.* ⁴⁰ *Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.* ⁴¹ *The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,* ⁴² *and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* ⁴³ *Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."*

A parable is a simple with a spiritual lesson. In Matthew 13, Jesus tells us why He speaks in parables. In that text, He tells us it is to reveal God's Truth to the heart that is receptive. Secondly, He speaks in parables to conceal God's Truth from the heart that is not receptive. We learn from Jesus, God is not interested in speaking to us if we are not interested in listening to Him.

Jesus is teaching a large crowd and some are committed to following Jesus and some are merely curious. Jesus first tells them the parable of the soils, which we considered in our previous study. This is a parable which teaches us there are four different ways a person might listen to God. He tells us this parable in order to urge us to listen to God's Word with open, receptive and humble hearts. Only then will we be fruitful. Jesus says,

⁹ *"He who has ears, let him hear."*

Jesus is going to repeat this curious phrase in our text, in Verse 43. This statement invites us, as readers and listeners of the story to ask ourselves: Do I have ears to hear? Jesus is pressing this forward, indicating we may not have that kind of reception.

Two years ago I attended a human factors class with my son, Daniel, at the United States Air Force Academy. The class studied various effects of human anatomy and psychology and responses and abilities in war time situations. The lecture that day concerned the design of the outer ear, the pinna. He talked about the pinna's ability to capture sound and funnel it into the inner ear. Ultimately, a signal is sent to the brain whereby we interpret that sound.

One unique aspect of the human ear's design is that the pinna is positioned in such a way to best capture sound in front of us. Our ears can capture sound behind us, but not with near the accuracy. For instance, in a blind situation, a human ear that hears a sound in front of the person, that person, without sight, is able to locate the source of that sound within a few inches. However, if that same sound at the same distance occurs behind the person, it is only able to be located within a six- to eight-foot range. That is a big difference.

The military, of course, is interested in these kinds of studies because lives depend upon a higher degree of hearing accuracy. A Navy Seal or an Army Ranger may save lives if he can locate a sound occurring behind him more accurately and quicker. The United States military designs special helmets which enables the human ear to capture the same sound behind them as it does in front. This is a huge tactical advantage in war time.

In our study, we listen to a story Jesus teaches us about the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus implores us, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” What do we need in order to have ears that hear? First, we need to hear God’s voice as He speaks to us through His Word. This is clearly Jesus’ reference in His call upon our lives. The seed the soil receives in the parable of the soils is the Word of God and the fullness of the Gospel and the message of God’s Kingdom.

Our natural ears are deaf to God’s voice and deaf to His message of life. We need God’s special helmet, God’s special instrument, that enables us to hear His Truth if we are to have ears that hear. We need God’s Holy Spirit. Apart from God’s Holy Spirit we would never have ears to hear the message of the Kingdom, yet God freely offers His Spirit to us if we would simply believe in Jesus, embrace Him as our Messiah and commit our souls to obeying Him. Without God’s salvation none of us would have ears to hear. We need God’s helmet, given as a gift of His grace, so that we might be able to hear the message of the Kingdom.

But, also, having received the Holy Spirit, having received this special helmet, we must put in on daily. This is the reason why the Apostle Paul will write, in Galatians 5,

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

In order to have ears that hear, we also need to hear the footsteps of the enemy. I recognize I am stretching Jesus’ phrase a bit, but I believe a part of hearing God’s Word means we identify the lies of the Evil One. If we do not have ears that hear Satan’s footfall as he approaches from behind us to destroy our life, we will not be hearing God’s Word. Instead, we will be paying attention to the lie Satan is given to us.

Sometimes the believer can easily discern Satan’s activity because his activity is obvious. For instance, we can hear his footsteps as he promotes pornography or abortion or drug addiction or murder or rape or child molestation or sex slavery. All of these things sound evil right in front of us and easy to locate, but other times Satan works behind us and this is truly when we need to put on God’s Holy Spirit so we can have ears to hear to locate that evil and perceive Satan’s work.

Satan’s footsteps often fall with sounds of covetousness or gossip or deceit or worry or fear or bitterness or lust of the flesh or boastful pride. These are sounds Satan makes in our lives everyday which are difficult to locate apart from the Holy Spirit. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. We need God’s Holy Spirit.

Satan is described by the Apostle Peter a lion that prowls, seeking someone to devour.¹ Beloved, even as believers, even as Christians, followers of Jesus, we will not perceive this lion’s prowling unless we are wearing the helmet of our salvation, the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. As we approach this parable, and every time we open God’s Word, we want to ask the question: Do I have ears to hear?

Jesus begins teaching this particular parable with this phrase, in Verse 23, “The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared...”, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like...” Each parable in Matthew 13 begins this way and Jesus wants us to know He is describing a different perspective, a different angle, on the same Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Right away we must ask the question: What is the Kingdom of Heaven? The Kingdom of Heaven is not something brand new Jesus is introducing. This Kingdom is the same Kingdom God has been revealing in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom in which God reigns upon the throne and reverses the painful consequences of the fall, consequences such as disease, conflict, war, depression, heartache, poverty and brokenness. All these are vanquishes in God’s Kingdom, in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus is not announcing a different kingdom from the Kingdom already revealed in Old Testament times.

¹ 1 Peter 5:8

This is not a change in the Kingdom, but in these parables Jesus is teaching new ideas about the Kingdom which were not previously revealed in the Old Testament. In Old Testament times we read about a Messiah who would bring His Kingdom of joy and peace. In Old Testament times we read about a Messiah who would suffer to bear sin and who would ultimately receive glory, but it is here, in the New Testament, with Jesus and these parables we come to understand there will be a long delay between the suffering of the Messiah and the glory which will be His. The Old Testament did not teach that nor reveal that.

We will also understand during that in between period of the suffering of the Christ and the glory which are ultimately His, the Evil One, Satan, the Devil, will be at work in the midst of this Kingdom. We will also going to learn, during this time, the Kingdom of Heaven is not going to take root in one big motion, but it is going to gradually grow, little by little, over time as the Word of God is planted. During this time, as well, different people will have different responses between the time of the suffering of Christ and His glory. People will hear the same message and some will receive the Messiah and some will reject Him.

We learn from these parables, at the end of the age, at the end of the time when Jesus, the Messiah, is ultimately given the glory due Him, there will be an individual accounting regarding how one responded during that part of the Kingdom age. All of these truths, and more, are unveiled to us by Jesus in these parables, particularly in the parables of Matthew 13.

Why does Jesus unveil these truths about the Kingdom to us? Why are these things so important. It is so we might worship God and we might not grow discouraged as we experience brokenness of this present world, saying, “The Messiah has come. He is supposed to have instituted the Kingdom. Where is this Kingdom? Why is this Kingdom is not as it is described fully in the Old Testament?” Jesus unveiled these truths about the Kingdom of Heaven in this present age so we might not be deceived by Satan and fall into sin, so that we might have hope as we look to our future with Jesus as our Messiah and the glory which will ultimately be His and the glory we will ultimately share. Jesus teaches these parable so that we might enjoy God and enjoy His Kingdom now and forever.

If we are going to boil this parable of the wheat and the weeds into a single sentence, this is the sentence I would state: Though Satan works to destroy God’s Kingdom, Jesus prevails over him and establishes His Kingdom.

In this story Jesus is telling, He tells us,

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ 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.”’”

I love Verse 36 because the disciples are perplexed by Jesus’ teaching. I am so thankful for this because I believe I would be perplexed by this parable as well if the disciples did not ask the question. How good it is to have theological curiosity when we come to God’s Word. I am fearful we are losing this in the modern church – tell me something practical, give to me a quick sentence and I will be on my way. But, not the disciples. They said, “This is curious! There are some deep truths imbedded in the story and we want to learn more about them. We are curious to ask and wait on the Master to tell us exactly what this story means, and Jesus does,

³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

In the parable of the soils, the seed is the Word of God, but Jesus uses the same imagery but with a different meaning, the seed is the sons of the Kingdom.

We will discover three truths that drive this parable. **The first truth is: Jesus sovereignly works to grow His Kingdom,**

³⁷ “*The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.*” ³⁸ *The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.*

Notice there is only one field. There are not two fields where one is the enemy’s field which the enemy has a right to and ownership over and another which is the Son of Man’s field. There is only one field and who owns this field? He is the One who plants seed in that field during the day. He does so because He has legal right to do so. He plants during the day because He is the legal owner. The field is the world and who owns the world? The Son of Man does; God does. This world is not Satan’s.

Yes, Satan exerts significant influence as an enemy of God, but he does so illegally. He has no rights to this place. It is not his world.

I remember this truth being an incredible comfort to me as a high school student. I saw the world I was living in much the way high schoolers today see the world they are living in as well. They see it is twisted and misshapen by evil and sin. I saw how drugs and alcohol crept into my friend’s lives. I saw how divorce and family conflict disrupted my friend’s security. I saw how sexual immorality brought darkness into their soul. I saw how violence, crime and disease brought fear and sorrow to so many. And, I saw how alluring sin was to my own heart.

I asked the question: Is this the way the world is supposed to be? If this world were the Devil’s world, the answer would be, “Yes. It is the way the world is supposed to be because this world is the Devil’s and he is evil and twisted and bent and the world is simply taking his shape.”

But, as I read the Bible, I discovered this is not the Devil’s world, this is God’s world. So, is this the way the world is supposed to be? Our answer, as Christians, is, “No! This is not the way the world is supposed to be. God owns the world and as His child we are given rights by the Owner of the field to work in the field, to conform the field, to God’s image, God’s values, God’s Truth, to be His instruments, to bring about the Kingdom of Heaven.

I need to work according to God’s means. Scripture talks about what God’s means are and what are not God’s means. In the story, the workers wanted to conform the field to the owner’s wishes, but they were wanting to do it in a way that would destroy the Kingdom. We must be careful of this and we must work according to God’s methods and not only be concerned just with God’s ultimate goal. We have a right to work in God’s field to produce God’s fruit through God’s means. I was encouraged by that truth as a high schooler and I am encouraged by it today because many will tell us we have no right to work in this field.

I remember hearing in high school the words to the hymn, “This Is My Father’s World” and what an encouragement it was to me,

This is my Father's world.
O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.²

When we watch the evening news or we read some news feed off of the internet or observe evil in the workplace, it is right for us to say, “This is not the way the world is supposed to be,” but let us not grow discouraged by the reality of the Devil’s influence in this world. This is one of the things this parable teaches us. We should expect the Devil’s influence for Jesus taught us there would be a time this is exactly what the Kingdom of Heaven would be like. Instead of growing discouraged at the presence of painful evil and wrong in God’s world, let us resolve to work along with our Messiah to advance the Kingdom of Heaven in this world.

² “This Is My Father’s World,” Maltbie D. Babcock, 1858-1901.

There is one field, yet there are two sowers. The first sower is the Son of Man and the second sower is the Devil himself. There are two kinds of seed. The first is the sons of the Kingdom and the second is the sons of the Evil One. And, there are two kinds of harvests. One is unto life and the other is unto destruction.

The first sower is the Son of Man. The Son of Man is sovereignly working in this world to this present day. The Kingdom of Heaven is a Kingdom in which the Son of Man sovereignly works to reap the harvest for Himself. Think of that. He sows into this world sons of the Kingdom. The only way sons of the Kingdom find themselves in the field of the world is because the Son of Man has graciously planted us here.

If you are a born-again child of God, living in this present world, you are here because God planted you here. God, in His grace and mercy, worked to plant you here as a son of God, a child of the Holy One. I believe the Son of Man, as He plants, plants very specifically in specific places. If you are a son of the Kingdom planted in a specific part of the field known as Central Illinois, this is not by accident. It is the Messiah's sovereign and the Messiah's sovereign design is always successful. The Son of Man sows His seed purposefully and His purpose is to reap a harvest for Himself for all of eternity for His glory.

If you are a child of God do you know why you are planted in this world? The purpose of our planting is so that our life might bring about the glory of God now and forever. Isn't that awesome! We get to enjoy the Kingdom of God, but our purpose is wrapped up in God's glory. Why does any farmer plant a field? It is so he might receive a harvest at the end and that he might receive a benefit. God sows sons of the Kingdom so that He would receive glory through our lives. Our life's purpose, as sons of the Kingdom, is bound up in spiritually growing in this world with the end that our life would bring glory to God. What an awesome purpose that is.

There are two application questions. First, Christian, do you daily give thanks to Jesus that He sovereignly worked to plant you in His field so that you would have life and that you would have eternal purpose? Do we thank God everyday for that? It is His sovereign work and we have done nothing to produce that. Secondly, Christian, are you growing? If we fail to grow we cannot expect to be a part of the harvest and that is the issue.

The second idea central to the story is: Satan opposes Jesus' Kingdom and he works to destroy it. While the owner and the workers are sleeping the enemy comes and sows weeds amidst the wheat and then leaves. Here, Jesus is dividing all of humanity into two camps and there are only two camps of human kind that matter. It is not two camps of gender, male or female. It is not the category of ethnicity, whether one is Asian, Indian, white, black, Hispanic, etc. It is not the category of camp or class: upper, middle, or lower and everything in between.

The only distinction that matters is whether or not we are sons of the Kingdom or sons of the Evil One. There is no middle ground. We are one or the other.

Someone may scratch their head and ask, "Pastor, are there really sons of the Evil One?" That is what Jesus says. It sounds very harsh to our modern ears, but the Messiah creates this distinction. If we are not a son of the Kingdom, planted in this world for the purpose of bringing God glory, guess what we are. We are sons of the Evil One.

How does one become a son of the Kingdom. Later in Matthew 18, Jesus will tell us,

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

²And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³and said, "*Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*"

A person must experience a conversion, a change, because our natural state is to be born into the camp called "sons of the Evil One" so we must be converted, transformed, from that camp and planted back into God's Kingdom. How do we do that? We do that by humbling ourselves like a child, recognizing, "God, I am a sinner and I need Your salvation. I recognize Jesus as my Messiah and I embrace Him." Are you a son of the Kingdom?

The Apostle John will tell us this simply as well when he says, in John 1,

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We are responsible for this response that we would have toward the Messiah God sends into this world.

This enemy sows deliberately weeds into God's field. He does so because he hates God, he hates God's glory, he hates God's people who bring God glory, and he works and labors to destroy God's Kingdom. How evil must Satan be.

Think of this, Satan exerts tremendous energy through great, sweaty work, investing untold hours of time to no productive end whatsoever. The only goal in his view is destructive. Satan does not have a goal to produce a great harvest that would do some good for himself or for others. His only goal is destructive. He is mean and he is cruel through and through. The Devil sets himself to undo all the good the Messiah would do. His name is Apollyon which means "destroyer". He never plants a valuable crop; he only plants weeds for the purpose of destroying the good crop.

We must understand you and I are responsible for our lives. We are responsible whether we are weeds or wheat. But, also know Satan, with malice, works to deceive us into thinking his plan is full of life and his plan will end up with great joy and glory. But, that is never really his goal. His glory is not to bring us anything good. His glory is only to destroy and if we allow Satan to plant us into this world for his purposes, our life's purpose will be forever to join in destruction.

God alone offers a way of life. God alone offers eternal purpose and glory. That way is through Jesus. What is the Kingdom of Heaven like? Jesus teaches us that in the Kingdom of Heaven we will experience a time during which Satan sows seeds the same time the Messiah sows seeds.

In what part of God's field does Satan sow the seed of his children? Is it in crack houses and places of prostitution? Yes, he does that. Is it in prisons and in gang territories? Yes, he sows there. Is it in terrorist's camps and in dictator's inner circles? Yes, the sons of the Devil are there. Is it in abortion mills and slave trade industries? Yes, they are present there. Does Satan sow his seeds in our schools and in our neighborhoods? Yes, they are there. Is the local church a part of field of which Satan says, "I am not going to mess with that part of the field. That is off limits." No, everywhere there is God's field, all over the world, Satan will sow his seeds. That is the truth and we should not expect any place in this world, at this time, to be a sanctuary from the influence of Satan of sowing his children to do his destructive work. That is what the Kingdom of Heaven is like in this age.

Notice the servant's response to Satan's influence in the field. They are shocked by it and I believe many of us are still shocked by this. We should not be because Jesus taught us about this and what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, "Wait! This is Your field. You planted good seed. How did evil get here? How did this happen in Your field? How could this be?"

One of the great theological questions we wrestle with is: Why is there evil in this world? We are surprised in the things God allows. Jesus' answer as to why there is evil in this world is that an enemy has done this. Have you ever been shocked to discover the people who are part of the local church would live, talk and act opposite of the character of a child of God? He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

One possible reason people live, talk and act this way within the church is because they might not be children of God. A modern Christian says, "I have stopped going to church because there are too many hypocrites there." Is that why you have stopped going to church, the church Jesus died to purchase, the church that is Christ's bride, the church that is your spiritual family? Didn't Jesus teach you to expect that?

Why are we so shocked by that? It is because we have not had ears to hear and to listen to what Jesus says the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Let us not grow discouraged by this, but let us realize that is the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven in this age and the Son of Man's work is sovereign and He will ultimately prevail. He will ultimately bring glory to Himself and joy to His people, but for now is a time when the Devil has great influence. That is what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

Notice, as well, God's plan is not that the world gradually becomes better and better to the end of the age. No, God's plan is that evil and good reside side-by-side all the way to the end of the age and until God steps forward in ultimate judgment.

And this leads us to the last issue, Jesus triumphs over Satan's opposition. The Messiah's sovereign work is never frustrated by the enemy. He is always successful and He always prevails. The Messiah is patient in His working, but there is future day when all wrongs will be set right. Today is not that day, but that day is certain. Jesus said,

^{39b} *"The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels."*

Who receives the benefit of the harvest? The answer is two-fold. First, the owner of the field receives the benefit of the harvest. That is why the owner planted the field. God receives the benefit of the harvest of the salvation of His own children and the glory we bring Him forever and ever.

Secondly, the good seeds planted in the field also receive the benefit. Jesus tells us, we will be stored in God's barn and we will shine like the rays of the sun forever and ever; we participate in God's glory.

God plants the seeds, the sons of the Kingdom, into the field, the whole world, for His own pleasure and glory and He will reap a great harvest unto Himself. Revelation 7 talks about the end of this age,

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Beloved, harvest day is not going to be a day in which the Son of Man looks and says, "Boy, I guess all of the wheat died. I was not effective in saving any and bringing in any harvest." That is not going to happen because Jesus is sovereign and He is not going to let that happen. There is no part of God's field that does not produce a harvest.

Who benefits from the harvest? It is the Son of Man who forever and ever receives the glory due Him from the sons of the Kingdom planted in every part of the field. God is interested in missions. He plants in every part of the field. He is interested in missions in Peoria, Illinois and He is interested in missions to the farthest ends of the earth. If we are a part of the Kingdom of Heaven, we will be interested as well and we will be as active as well.

The seeds also experience the joy of the harvest, and what a sobering word this is,

⁴⁰ *"Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age."*

There are two camps of people: weeds and wheat. These are not separated in this age. The wheat lives side-by-side with the weeds, but these are not the same. They are radically different in their nature, in their origin and in their end. At the end of the age, on the day of reckoning, God separates the weeds from the wheat. The weeds experience one end and the wheat experience another. The weeds experience ultimate and final condemnation. The wheat experience glory. Listen closely what happened to the weeds,

⁴¹ *"The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Some say the God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath and the God of the New Testament is a God of mercy. Who tells this story? Jesus tells this story, gentle, merciful Jesus. He describes the future judgment as a fiery furnace. Think of that, being cast into a fiery furnace. Some will say, "Oh, pastor, that is metaphorical. It is not real fire. It is a figure of speech." Yes, it probably is a figure of speech, but it is a figure with meaning. There is a reason Jesus uses this figure of speech because it corresponds to what is real.

In fact, this fiery furnace is much more horrible than any fiery furnace we could possibly imagine. Any fiery furnace we could possibly imagine could burn our bodies and cause for us great suffering and pain. But, no fiery furnace I can imagine can cause my soul to burn and feel torment and that is what happens in this fiery furnace. It is not just body, but it is body and soul. It torments the body and soul and there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Beloved, it is right for us to fear the wrath of God. Not everyone will be saved from the wrath of God at the end of the age. Some must endure it forever and ever.

Some will say, "I cannot accept a God who would condemn people to an eternal punishment. I cannot accept a God who demands everyone must believe in Jesus to be rescued. I cannot accept a God such as that." On the Day of Judgment, the big question will not be whether we approve of God, but whether or not God approves of us.

God will not be sitting in the chair of accusation. No, He will be sitting as Judge. One huge application for us is to ask the question: What kind of seed am I? Am I wheat or am I a weed? Am I a son of the Kingdom or am I a son of the Evil One. Jesus teaches this parable so that no one will be terrifyingly surprised on that certain future day. No one needs to be terrified. No one needs to be surprised?

Are you ready? Are you prepared to stand before God and give an account?

I often ask people this question: If you were to stand before God today and He were to ask you, 'Why should I let you into My Heaven?' what would you say?" This is a huge question to know the answer. Let me share my answer: I claim the blood of Jesus, Your Son, as my Savior. I cannot give You any other argument and I make no other plea, but You promised me in Your Gospel that it is enough that Jesus died and that He died for me." Beloved, is that your response? It is only that response which allows us to be free from condemnation and to know the joy of what Jesus describes here, that future joy Jesus describes in this parable,

⁴³ *"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."*

This is a righteousness not on the basis of our good works but on the basis of Christ's righteousness imputed to us through faith and they are the sons of the Kingdom.