

## **Matthew 13:24-30 “Jesus’ Lesson of the Wheat and the Weeds!” Pentecost 9 August 6-7, 2017**

By Pastor Kenneth Mellon, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Pleasant Valley Rd., West Bend, WI

God the Father’s grace and peace are yours, as you are planted in your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Just before Jesus told this parable, He spoke the parable of the Sower and the seed: How God’s Word can change a human heart dead in sin to a believing heart. He continues with this parable in Matthew 13:24-30 These are Your words heavenly Father. Keep us as Your own through Your truth. Your Word is truth.

Dear Christian Wheat in God’s Field,

What do you feel you are today: wheat or weeds? Do you see yourself daily growing in faith or losing it? Most people in the world think that all is well between them and God. But, the Last Day is coming, which we reveal who really is blessed or who will lose God’s blessings forever. We hear:

### **Jesus’ Lesson of the Wheat and the Weeds!**

**First, the devil always seeks to deceive us.** Jesus pictured the devil as working among believers. It’s been said that when God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel next door. We believers have lived through this. When Christians accomplish good things for Christ, the devil does all that he can to stop them. Jesus said, *“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat.”* (v.24-25) Jesus said, *“The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.”* (v.38-39)

The devil plants false teaching. We can’t judge people’s hearts as to who has true faith. But we can judge what people teach. Some of you have heard about Scientology. Their leaders claim that members can follow its teachings and still be Christians. Can this be true or has the devil found a way to plant weeds among wheat to deceive people? Let’s compare Scientology to the Bible. They teach that there is a supreme being, but he is not the triune God. This group teaches that there are immortal spirits which inhabit one body after another over centuries of time. According to their faith, people have no sin or sinful nature. They only make bad judgments. Through paying for special therapy a person supposedly can clear away these bad thoughts. If enough people clear their thoughts, the world could become pure. This religion is based on psychology and science fiction but not on truth. It appeals to the sinful nature in two ways: 1. to offer a self-help program to be saved and 2. it tries to make a heaven on earth. Their teachings oppose the truths of the Bible.

Our souls don’t move from body to body. *“Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment....”* (Hebrews 9:27) At death, a believer’s soul enters heaven. Jesus told the believing thief on the cross, *“Today you will be with Me in paradise.”* (Luke 23:43) An unbeliever’s soul goes to hell, like the soul of the rich man while the soul of Lazarus went to heaven. Our bodies at death are not to be discarded like a worn-out mattress. Jesus promised to raise the same bodies of people and reunite them with their souls. Job confessed this truth. (Job 19:26) So did Paul in 1 Corinthians 15: *“Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”* (v.20) Despite what Scientology says about perfecting human nature, the Bible tells us that we were born with a sinful nature and it will remain sinful until we die. All the counseling in the world won’t make sin go away. It would be like trying to erase a scar on your arm simply by washing it with water. It’s far deeper than they imagine. God warned in His Word, *“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”* (Galatians 6:7-8) We don’t have to pay a fortune to clear ourselves of trouble. The Bible tells us, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23)

Throughout history the devil has planted such “weeds” of false teachings like Scientology among believers. In the Old Testament, he used idol worship to turn the people’s hearts from God. In the New Testament, the devil used false teachers to say that faith alone in Jesus wasn’t enough to be saved. They needed works. That claim is what made Martin Luther so distressed in his time and is still taught by some. In the past, the devil convinced people to deny that Jesus had a real body or to deny that He was truly God. If there is any type of “weed”, i.e. persons or teachings that can harm a believer’s faith Satan will use it.

Another devilish attack is to get us to question if we are true believers: whether we are true wheat in God’s garden. He tries to convince us that as sinners we deserve to be bundled up with the weeds and thrown into eternal fire. What are we to do? Repent by admitting we are sinners. Truly, in Jesus’ story we should be the weeds. But we also believe the Gospel of forgiveness and life. Paul listed all kinds of sins which should keep us out of heaven. Then he wrote, *“That is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11)* God has changed us through His Word to be His living plants for good!

**Second, Christ continues to care for us.** Jesus said that He was the one who planted the good seed which turned into good plants. (v.37) Did you ever notice that weeds don’t need any care; they just come up and thrive where you don’t want them to be. But plants that we grow by seed need watering and weeding. Good plants need care! So, it is important that we hear God’s Word so that by the Holy Spirit we will keep turning away from our sins so they don’t choke out our faith and that we receive the living water of the Gospel to strengthen our faith in Jesus! We daily need to hear: *“When you were dead in your sins ... God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.” (Colossians 2:13)* John wrote, *“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! .... We know that when He appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:1-2)*

Jesus takes care of us, despite unbelievers in the world. Jesus said in the parable: *“Let both (the wheat and weeds) grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.” (v.30)* Judgment Day is the time when Jesus will give His ultimate care to all who believe in Him. In order to eternally protect us: *“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (v.41-43)* Right now we know that we are saved by grace through faith alone in the sacrifice of Jesus. On Judgment Day all the world will know that we truly belong to God!

You and I may sometimes feel like weeds because our sinful nature or sins affect us. We must constantly be watchful, because the devil tries to deceive. He tried to tempt Jesus! Jesus was treated like an unwanted weed by people of His time. He was rejected by men like a helpless plant pulled up by the roots. Yet, He won eternal life to benefit us as we trust in Him. Even now we are receiving His care. He knows all our needs and will save us just as He promised! Amen.