

SEVERAL PARABLES IN REGARD TO THE [KINGDOM OF GOD](#)

Matthew 13:24-52

Key Verses: 13:40 and 43

"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age" (40). "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear" (43).

Today's passage teaches us mainly about the kingdom of God through several parables. It is interesting that the children of the kingdom of God have to live with the children of the devil in this world. So the children of God cannot expect paradise in the world because they have to coexist with the children of the devil, just as a man of noble character, Socrates, lived with his wife Xanthippe, a woman of total depravity. The children of the kingdom of God must patiently wait until God deals with the children of the devil. At the same time, we must be like a treasure-hunter in looking for the kingdom of God. In this passage we also learn that the kingdom of God grows and expands in character. But we modern people have a problem: Most people in this generation do not believe in the kingdom of God. Some do believe in the kingdom of God; they are an absolute minority. When we study the Bible, we find that the plot of the Bible is lost paradise and the [rehabilitation](#) of paradise. The key point of [the Bible](#) is the kingdom of God for the children of God, and the kingdom of the devil. But most Christians miss the main point of the Bible. They are not focusing on the kingdom of God, but on this world. There is an impression that many believe Jesus' messianic ministry on the earth, but not - the kingdom of God. They want to live in this world forever with the money they earn. Moreover, all people, including children of God, decline to believe in the existence of hell. The Bible teaches us both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil. When we talk about the kingdom of God, people are happy to hear it. But when we talk about the kingdom of the devil, that is, hell, they are infuriated, saying, "God is love. So there is no hell." One girl knows her father deserves hell. So she does not believe the sovereignty of God, through which the kingdom of God and hell are determined. However, it is important to study about the kingdom of God and hell. First, the parable of the weeds (24-30). In this part good and evil are categorized. But these days many think that beneficial things are good and things that cause us to suffer loss are evil. In history, the concept of good and evil has been long disputed. Soon Ja, one of the Chinese philosophers, said, "Man is evil." Confucius and his followers said, "Man is good." Confucius, like John Dewey, believed that man can ameliorate himself by means of education. St. Paul said man is good and evil. But this part of the passage clearly classifies good and evil.

Look at verses 24-25. "Jesus told them another parable: 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, and went away." In these verses we learn that the children of God and the children of the devil must coexist. It is not easy for the children of God or even for the children of the devil. If we read Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment," there are two persons who are quite a contrast. One is a diligent and honest student. The other is an old woman who

owns a pawn shop. The young man finally kills the old woman, thinking that such a selfish person should not exist in the world. Allegorically speaking, the young student and the owner of the pawn shop cannot live together in the same apartment building even though it is very spacious. Likewise, the children of the kingdom of God find it very hard to get along with the children of the devil in this world. The Bible tells us that the kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field (25). But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest'" (24-30).

In these verses we learn that our God is a great God. Our God is a universal God. He even sends rain on the good and the evil. Our God allows evil men to live in this world even though they don't deserve it. From time to time we confront terrible events. Several years ago, one who mangled and killed his wife and his wife's boyfriend with a knife was pronounced "not guilty." The children of the kingdom of God see these kind of events overflowing in this world and wonder why God does not immediately punish them and do away with them. But our God is a long-suffering and patient God (Ro 2:4). Our God wants all men to come to his Son and be saved. Our God gives the opportunity for the children of the devil to come to Jesus and be saved. At the same time, God wants the children of the kingdom of God to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Of course, God knows the world is wicked and adulterous due to evildoings of the kingdom of the devil.

Our God is the almighty God and the God of love. But at the harvest time, he collects the weeds and ties them in bundles to be burned. Then he gathers the wheat and brings it into his barn. Look at verse 30. "Let both 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." We will think more about this later.

Second, the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast (31-35). Look at verse 31. "He told them another parable: The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field." A mustard seed is the smallest seed among all seeds. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, when it grows it is the largest of garden plants. This is a beautiful allegory of how Christianity starts small like a mustard seed, but grows like the largest tree. For example, the kingdom of God on earth began through the baby in the manger. The baby in the manger is Jesus. Jesus was helpless compared with Caesar Augustus, who was sitting on the throne of the Roman Empire. But Caesar's name has become a dog's name and Caesar's palace has left no trace. Many archaeologists have tried to find Caesar's palace for the last several hundred years. But they couldn't find anything about it nor any relics of it. On the other hand, Jesus, the baby in a manger, was nothing but a small baby. But there was the life of God in him. So he grew and conquered the world with the love of God. Verse 32 reads, "Though it is the smallest

of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

Look at verse 33. "He told them still another parable: The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough." If we mix a certain amount of flour and make a lump, it looks small. But when we mix the flour and put some yeast in it, it expands into a big clump of dough. So without yeast, making delicious bread is impossible. Actually, in the Bible, yeast is usually used to illustrate bad influence. But here, yeast is used in illustrating the kingdom of God. The main point is that the kingdom of God is expanding. Therefore those who have the kingdom of God can grow in their inner man as yeast expands in dough. Those who have the kingdom of God in their hearts can have a great vision. They are not swayed by a small amount of money or adulterous feelings. Those who have the kingdom of God always dwell in a great dream and vision.

Third, the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl (44-46). The parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl are basically the same. But there are different emphases. Look at verse 44. "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." This parable teaches us a value system. These days young people generally think money is everything. So one promising young man works two jobs to get a little more money. He has no time to read the classics. He has no time to study the Bible, not to mention feed sheep. As a result, he is growing as a truck driver candidate. When we review the American educational system, we see that it is mainly focused on science. The humanities, music and art have been largely ignored for a long time. Of course, this is good for attaining immediate benefits. But American young people are getting wild because they do not study humanity properly and are not developing their emotions properly. When we develop our emotions properly, we can become disciplined people and overcome wild ways.

Since John Dewey's educational philosophy has been adopted, this country has lost the normal development of young people's character. Science-centered education has produced a huge amount of weapons for war. At the same time it has deprived American youngsters of a value system. Money is not everything. A value system is everything. Without a value system one is liable to become a child of the devil. Where there is no value system, there is no power to overcome sufferings, which are required in doing something great. When we have no value system, we can become like a hog or pig or sow or swine or boar. It is very important to work hard to plant a true value system in the hearts of American young people. It is very important to work hard to help American youngsters grow in humanity. It is most important for us to work hard to disseminate the seeds of gospel truth in the hearts of American youngsters so that they may have a value system, noble character, and vision, and be men and women of sacrifice, and altruistic people. The parable of the pearl is basically the same as the parable of the hidden treasure. Look at verses 45-46. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and

bought it." If we are going to obtain that which is of the greatest value, we must not be petty men but ambitious and venturesome, like the man who sold all his possessions to get one pearl. Allegorically speaking, the pearl is the kingdom of God.

Fourth, the parable of the net (47-52). Let's read verses 47-48. "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away." This tells us that there is a definite difference between good fish and bad fish. Bad fish are finally picked up and thrown away. Verse 49 reads, "This is how it will be at the end of the age." Ordinary people do not think about what will happen at the end of the age. Here, "at the end of the age" implies at the time of one's death or at the time of Jesus' coming again. It is hard to distinguish between good people and bad people. These days bad people are regarded as good people because they have money and good positions. On the other hand, those who live a poor and pure life for the sake of the proclamation of the gospel are known as bad people. But the day will come when our Lord Jesus Christ separates good people from bad people. Those who lived for their stomach only will be in great trouble. Verses 49-50 read, "This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Jesus asked his disciples in verse 51, "Have you understood all these things?" They answered, "Yes, sir!" But their confident "yes" is questionable when we read the last part of the gospel. Finally Jesus tells them that everybody must have new treasures and old treasures in his storeroom (52). This means that they must have the kingdom of God in their hearts.

Fifth, the parable of the weeds explained (36-43). Jesus' disciples were very happy about hearing the other parables. It was like a sweet dream while they were hearing other parables. But when they remembered the first parable, the parable of the weeds, something bothered their hearts. So his disciples came to him and said, "Please explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field" (36). They wanted to hear the parable of the weeds one more time because they did not have the concept of each key word. Jesus said to them, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels" (37-39). After hearing Jesus' explanation of each word, they understood better.

But Jesus did not stop there. Jesus explained why he told them the parable of the weeds and explained it again. Verses 40-43 read, "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 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. He who has ears, let him hear." Ordinary people think they will be okay. But they will not be okay. There is a day of severe judgment for those who lived only for their stomachs. But those who live for the glory of God will shine like the sun in the

kingdom of their Father. Read verse 43 again.

Today we learned that the children of God ought to live together with the children of the devil in this world. We must overcome ourselves to do so. Moreover we must pray for them to come to our Lord Jesus Christ. Ordinary people think the kingdom of heaven is nowhere. But those who have Jesus Christ in their hearts can see the kingdom of God and possess the kingdom of God. So let's be treasure-hunters.