

Alright, today we are starting the section of Matthew 13:24-43. Quite a section, just like the last one. Chapter 13 verses 24 to 43.

I'm going to give you, this morning, a lot of introductory information. This information is important for correctly understanding the meaning of the parables. There are eight parables in chapter 13. We've studied one. The first parable covered the first 23 verses. So the rest of the chapter, in fact up through verse 52, we will cover seven more parables. But I don't know of any other section of Scripture than what we are studying right here about the parables that it has so much difference among scholars and Bible teachers, even believers in the pew, about what these parables mean.

We are going to study two out of the next three parables, where Jesus doesn't give the answer as to what each symbol, or person, or event represents. And so people have a tendency to isolate certain parables in the chapter and go off on their own opinions and own beliefs about what they mean. There are some very good Bible teachers that have done that, that have gone off. Taken one of these parables and just gone off on a tangent where it doesn't mean what they say at all. And the only way that you can nail it down, so to speak, as to what exactly the parables are saying, is to understand this introductory information that I am going to give you. So it's technical. It's Bible knowledge. But I want you to hang in there with me because I want you to understand this all has to do with understanding what the parables mean.

In chapter 13:1-23, that we just finished and now we are in 24 through 43, they are all one section. So verse 1 through verse 43 is all one section in the Greek text. It's divided in half, which is what we've done, and they mirror each other. You can take them and cut them in half and they mirror each other. Each section, verses 1 through 23, and 24 through 43, each of these parts has three sections to them.

- 1) The first part of the first section is verses 1 through 9, The Parable of the Sower. In the second half, verses 24 through 33, we have three parables. So the first section of each part is the presentation of parables.
- 2) The second part of the first section, verses 10 through 17, gives the reason for Jesus speaking in parables. We've already studied it, verses 10 through 17, the reason for Jesus speaking in parables. And the same thing with the second section in the second part, verses 34 and 35 present the reason for Jesus speaking in parables.
- (3) And then the third section, verses 18 to 23, Jesus explains The Parable of the Sower. And the third section of the second half, verses 36 through 43, is Jesus gives the explanation of The Parable of the Wheat and Tares.

So we have two parts. Two halves that make up a whole, and within each half are three parts that mirror each other. That tells us it's pointing to a unity here. You cannot divorce the

first half from the second half in order to understand these parables. Both have three sections that follow the same pattern so they go together.

Secondly, of the eight parables in this chapter the first four parables in verses 1 through 43, the first four parables are presented in the public, at the same time. So The Parable of the Sower plus the three that we are going to study in this section are all given at the same time, there's no break. The last four parables, verses 44 to 52, are presented in private to the disciples. So, they are sectioned off. Separated.

Thirdly, concerning the first four parables. If you look at verse 24 if you have your Bibles, or if you have your study guide, look in verses 24 and 31. Verse 24 of chapter 13 starts our second parable that we are going to start this morning. And the text basically says, **And another parable He put alongside.** The English text says, "to put forth," but it's literally the preposition **παρά**, another parable He put alongside them. He says the same thing in verse 31 when He starts the next parable, **And another parable He put alongside them.** The significance of this is the word *another*. There are two words in Greek for another: **ἕτερος** (heteros) is *another of a different kind*, **ἄλλος** (allos) is *another of the same kind*. This is **ἄλλος** - another parable of the same kind that He just gave. He put alongside, that is, He put alongside of the other parable. So, all these parables are all parables of the same kind, and they're all put alongside of each other. And I'll give you the punch line, because they all mean the same thing. That's what the grammatical structure is telling us. They're all connected.

And to make the technical point even more clear, not to bore you, but to show you how exact the text is. In verses 1 through 43, we have what is called a chiasmic formula: that's AB BA. Those of you that have taken the Greek class, I think you might be familiar with the term chiasmic, it is a formula: AB and BA. The two A's are the same and the two B's are the same.

In verses 3 and 33 we have the formula: **And Jesus spoke.** So, the first parable and the last parable of this group, **And Jesus spoke.**

In the middle two parables, verses 24 and 31 that we just took, he puts **Another parable He put alongside of**, in both of those instances are the same.

So you have the two A points at each end, bookends. And you have two statements in the middle introducing the middle two parables. And it makes a whole.

So, these first four parables, separated off from the last four are all meant to teach the same thing. In other words, you cannot divorce them or separate one from the other and go off on a tangent, and this is what solves the problem. If anybody, any believer, teacher, pastor, scholar, goes off on a tangent and away from this grammatical structure, they are wrong about what the text says. One thing we don't want to be, we don't want to be wrong, at least if we can help it.

So in verse 24 for today, in verses 24 through 30, we have The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. The word for tares is **ζιζάνια** (dzidzania) and it also means *darnel* or *bearded wheat*.

It's a false wheat and we will see about the wheat and the tares. As He's continuing the parables, **Another parable** (another of the same kind as The Parable of the Sower that He just finished) **He put alongside**. Put alongside of what? The Parable of the Sower. So, they are connected. So, He's presenting now the comparison of the kingdom of heaven to sowing of good seed.

The kingdom of heaven was likened to a man sowing (we know that means to spread or scatter seed) **to a man sowing good seed in his field** (Just like in The Parable of the Sower, but then we're told that corruption took place, verse 25) **but while the men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed or scattered darnel** (or tares) **in the midst of the wheat, and he** (the enemy) **went away**.

So, darnel or tares, also known as bearded wheat. When tares and wheat grow together they look exactly alike. You cannot tell the difference between wheat and tares until they have reached maturity and they bear fruit at the top of the stock. The wheat will have grain the tares will have what is called bearded wheat and it's not good to eat. But when it is ripe for harvest then the fruit is different. It is the only thing that's different between the two is what each stock produces, but they look the same.

In fact, the slaves they use to harvest the wheat and the tares and they used to take the tares and since it wasn't good for consumption by human beings they took the tares and fed them to the cows and to the chickens and to the animals, feed for the animals. The problem was that when the darnel, or tares, became moldy the and they fed it to the animals it killed them. It killed the animals. So they decided that instead of feeding it to the animals they would just separate the wheat from the tares and they would take the tares and burn it. It's the only thing it was good for. But notice our text, it says, **The enemy came and sowed the tares or darnel in the midst of the wheat and went away**. Rival farmers used to do that to their neighbors so that there so that their neighbor farmers would not have a good crop. They would sneak over and they would plant tares, or darnel, in the midst of the wheat. And it became such a serious problem that the Roman government had to enact laws to punish people who were caught doing it. So here's a man that planted good seed in his field and then the enemy came and sowed the darnel, or the tares, in the midst of the wheat and he went his way. The enemy went back home.

Now, The Consequence of the Corruption. Now, keep in mind that even though he planted the tares in the midst of the wheat you could not tell they were there until the crops ripened and they were ready for harvest. They did not know. The landowner did not know and the servants did not know it was there until the fruit of the crop matured at the top.

So, verse 26 says, The Consequence of the Corruption. **But when the blades sprouted, and produced fruit, then appeared**. Literally, *then became apparent*, not *appeared*, because it was always there but it became apparent also that the darnel, or the tares, were there also. So, the only way they could tell is when the crops ripened for harvest.

Verse 27, The Condition Reported by the Slaves. **And when the slaves of the housemaster came to him, they said to him, Sir** (or literally, Lord. These are house slaves speaking to their housemaster and they are calling him Lord, literally.) **Did you not sow good**

seed in your field? (and course he gives the nod, "Yes, he did.") **Therefore from whence** (or literally, from where) **does it have the darnel?** (or the tares). "Where did the tares come from if you didn't plant it?"

So now, The Communication Between the Slaves and their Master. Verse 28, **And he says unto them, "An enemy has done this."** The word *enemy* in the Greek text is two words: *a hostile man*. That is the literal translation, *a hostile man did this*. **And the slave said to him, "Do you desire therefore that after we go out that we should gather them up?"** It is like hiring a gardener to weed your flower bed. "Do you want us to go out and pull out the tares?"

But the housemaster said, "No, that not while gathering the darnel or the tares you should uproot the wheat with them." So, after the growing process, the root systems of the tares and the wheat have now intertwined and are now connected. And so the housemaster is saying, "No. If you go out you pull out the tares now you're liable to pull out some wheat with it. So, you can't do that."

Verse 30, **"Allow both to grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'Gather together first the tares (or darnel) and bind them into bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat together into my barn.'"**

So, The Parable of the Sower, there's one field in the parable of the sower. There are four different conditions of ground, but one field. It is all the same field. Only one person out of four in The Parable of the Sower bore fruit. The rest of the people, even while hearing the Word did not bear fruit. If you see the progression here the emphasis is, it's not *what's happening in the growth process*, as important as that is, it is *what is the fruit?* And the wheat and the tares both grow together. One kind bears fruit and the other doesn't. It's poisonous and has to be burned.

Now, you should know, as we are not going to get to it this week, but in verse 38 when Jesus explains The Parable of the Wheat and Tares, He's going to tell the disciples that the good seed that goes into the ground in this parable, they are the sons of the kingdom. And the tares, the bad seed, are the sons of the evil one. So, the wheat and the tares are God's people and Satan's people growing up at the same time. And what Jesus is saying here is the housemaster, God the Father's will is not that He cleans out the evil from amongst His people; He has to let the evil people and God's people be in it at the same time because their root systems have become intertwined and hooked together and if God roots out some of the evil people He's going to take some of God's people with it.

Very important to understand and we are talking about God's kingdom we have two different kinds of people doing the same thing. Same activities. Hearing the Word. Being religious. Having doctrinal beliefs. But the difference is the bearing of fruit. The bearing of fruit. Both look alike but only one kind bears fruit. Both look the same. Both can talk the same. Both can even believe the same things. Exactly the same by outward appearance. But when the harvest is ripe, the key is the fruit.

We ended off with this last week in The Parable of the Sower. We quoted from Jesus in Matthew 7:20. Jesus said, **By their fruits you shall know them.** Not their doctrine, as important as that is. Not what church they go to. Not their personal beliefs, but the fruit.

And as we shared with you last week, fruit is not works. Anything that a human being produces, as religious as it might be, that is human effort and it's called *works*. You don't know how many people I've talked to over the years that say, "Well, I bear fruit," and then they list all the works that they do, all the church works that they do, and all the human effort they put forth for the Lord. That is not fruit. Fruit is the expression and character of the Holy Spirit Himself. Fruit is not what He makes me to be. Fruit is the Holy Spirit Himself. I have the fruit of God's Spirit because I have God's Spirit and all of His character and whenever He expresses Himself, that is fruit. Whenever He's active in my life, that is fruit. I would be considered a fruit bearer.

And over the years, and even lately, more pointedly, more specifically, I've had conversations with people when they say, "Well, I bear fruit. I go to church. I bear fruit. I study my Bible." That is not fruit bearing, as good as that is, and the Lord might lead you to do that, but that's not fruit bearing. We saw from Galatians 5:22 that the fruit of the Spirit is love, **ἀγάπη**, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, it's all a fruit of God's Spirit. It is not of man. God doesn't make man take on the characteristics of fruit. God's Spirit is the expression and characteristics of fruit. Everything He does is fruit.

Remember last week we told you about the example of the tree. The sap in the midst of a fruit tree is the life of the tree. It is the sap going out into the branches that brings the life and produces the fruit. The tree itself does not produce fruit. It's the life in the tree. It is not the human being that produces the fruit. It's the life of the Spirit in the believer that produces the fruit.

And I started to tell a story of how pointedly and more specifically lately when someone says to me, "But I go to church and I read my Bible," and I say, "Just show me the spirit, okay? That's all I want to know. Let God's Spirit talk to me. I don't want to hear what your list is. I want to hear from God's spirit. So, you just be quiet and I'll just watch God's Spirit." And you know it's like, "What? What are you talking about? If I don't do anything, nothing is going to happen!" One guy told me that. "If I don't do the work, nothing will happen." Well, the Spirit of God is not there, that's why. The fruit becomes evident at harvest. You have to grow. You have to mature but the end result of that growth process is to produce fruit, not works.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed, verse 31. **Another parable He put alongside.** Another parable of the same kind and *put alongside* means *put this alongside of the other two because they all mean the same thing*. The comparison of the kingdom of heaven to sowing a mustard seed. It's an herb. **The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard plant, when a man took, he sowed in his field: which indeed is the least (or the smallest) than all the seeds: but whenever it should grow it is greatest (or larger) than the herbs.** Now someone objecting to this text has rightly said that a mustard seed is not the smallest, or least of all the seeds. It is not the smallest. There are other seeds that are smaller than a mustard seed or the seed of a mustard plant. But it says, **But whenever it should grow it is larger than the herbs.**

He's talking about the smallest of the seeds amongst the garden seeds. Its agricultural terms not all the seeds of the entire world, but the garden seed, it is the smallest. We are talking agricultural seeds. **It is the smallest, but whenever it should grow larger than the herbs it becomes a tree.** Some people have objected to the Scriptures here, that a small mustard plant never becomes a tree. Except that we have multiple testimonies from the Palestine area that mustard plant has been known to grow as tall as 12 to 15 feet high, especially around Lake Gennesaret. It grows into a tree some of these plants. It is not just here and there, there are many of them. So the emphasis here is something very small growing to be something very large. God's kingdom has started small. He has planted a seed in the ground. We will learn at the end of this section that the ground is the world. God's kingdom has been planted in the world and it is very small.

Acts chapter 1 tells us, try to comprehend this, after three years of public ministry, and after Jesus was crucified, rose from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, guess how many people, how many believers and followers He had from Acts chapter 1? 120. That's it. Thousands came to Him for healing. Thousands came to Him for ministry. Thousands left Him when He said, "Okay, no more miracles. Now you know who I am, come and follow Me." They wouldn't do it. Just like today. People will be religious. They have religious beliefs, but literally to follow Jesus Christ they reject Him. So God's kingdom grows and becomes a tree, becoming large. So, it started small, about 120 people, and God's kingdom is growing in the world.

And it becomes a tree so that the birds of the heaven come and nest in the branches of it. Now, what is interesting is that Jesus just gave this parable and the one before it but He didn't explain it. What does it mean? Again, if you understand the context of the chapter, the original language is pointing to the fact that all of these parables line up and mean the same thing.

I know of some good scholars, good Bible teachers, great brothers that have taken this where the birds come and nest in the branches of this large mustard plant that is turned into a tree, and they say the birds are people coming and receiving the Lord and coming into His kingdom. One pastor - and I've had fun with us over the years, cause you know me, I love this kind of stuff - where one pastor got up and told his congregation these birds are church members. And I told him, "Well, when you find out who the birds are, you might want to take that back. But then again, they might be your church members, I don't know." I wouldn't want to say that, and you say why is that?

We are introduced to the birds back in The Parable of the Sower. In verse 4, the birds come and remove the seed from the hard-packed ground so that the person can't receive the Word. In verse 19, Jesus said, "The birds represent the evil one." See why I have fun with that, when they say the birds are church members? The birds represent evil nesting in the branches of the kingdom. Now there are people that just say, "I cannot accept that," and they go off on tangents. They make the birds be people receiving Christ, people who are visiting, they make the birds be anything other than evil, which is what The Parable of the Sower told us.

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So we have, just in summarizing what we've talked about this morning, The Parable of the Sower, all one field, four different conditions, one of the four bearing fruit, the other three not. The other three not responding to the Word. So you have the good and the evil growing together but no fruit bearing for three.

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares. The tares, or the darnel, grow up in the midst of the wheat; and as I shared with you from verse 38, Jesus said the wheat represents the sons of the Kingdom and the tares, or darnel, represent the sons of the evil one. The sons of the Kingdom are growing up at the same time with the sons of the evil one. There is good and evil growing together. People don't have a problem with that but for some strange reason the exact same meaning, with the exact same message, with The Parable of the Mustard Seed is that it's small, the seed is small and it grows to be large but evil comes to nest in its branches as it grows. Same thing with The Wheat and Tares, the same thing with The Parable of the Sower, with the different kinds of soil. It is all the same.

What does that have to do with you and me? The church on earth belongs to Christ. True believers make up the church. But in and amongst true believers will be those who look the same, talk the same, and maybe even believe the same doctrines, but they have never been born of the Spirit of God. And they will be fellowshiping together and growing up together, which is why we have so many problems in our churches, is because good and evil are fellowshiping together and we have to be mindful of that. Just because I look like you, or talk like you, and believe like you, doesn't mean I'm one of you. It is the bearing of fruit after God cultivates. It is the bearing of fruit, the expression of His Spirit in my life. The leading of His Spirit in my life, to me personally and that others might see.

I heard a person tell me the other day, and it was actually a compliment, but he felt bad. He said, "I've sort of lost a lot of my friends. They don't like to come around me anymore, now that I'm a Christian." And my question was, "Well, why is that? Did you do something to offend them?" You know that was my seeking out. So he says, "I'm told that when people are around me God is always there." So people don't want to go. People don't want to be around him. I thought, "What a compliment." "Every time I'm around that guy God's always there so I don't want to around him."

Then there other times when people claim to be Christians, and yet if you're around them you there's no threat that you are going to get the Holy Spirit. I'm not saying we need to do works and we need to produce it, but I'm trying to say that the evidence that a person belongs to Christ is that Christ is there. And we in a personal way, in our personal life, everyday life we have interaction with Him, with the issues of life. And people come in contact with us and we have our struggles, and our interactions with Christ. And people see the Lord working in our life and they see the changes. They hear about the struggle. That's evidences that God's Spirit is there. But when we say, "Yup, nothing, not with me. No interaction with God's Spirit. I don't have any struggle with God's Spirit. I'm perfectly miserable without Him."

You see, it is the fruit of the Spirit, not the doctrine of the believer. Evil and good are mixed together and we have to be careful. We are called to be separate, to come out from

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amongst them. We have to be sensitive to the people that we are interacting with. Some are saved and some are not. That just because we all talk the same, look the same, and believe the same, doesn't mean everybody is saved the same. It's the fruit.

Next week we will continue with the next parables.