

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.**
- B. From Roy H. Enoch (2-27-94).
- C. This is called a "parable:"
 - 1. A parable is "a similitude;" the AV translates it "comparison, figure, parable, or proverb."
 - 2. It is an analogy where that which is unfamiliar is compared to that which is familiar.
 - 3. Preachers often define it as "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning."
 - 4. Jesus often described characteristics of the kingdom with parables.
- D. **Tares:** A kind of dandelion, the commonest of the four species, being the bearded, growing in the grain fields, as tall as wheat and barley, and resembling wheat in appearance (*Vine's*).

I. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE STORY OF SOWING IN THAT DAY.

- A. Sowing was a familiar scene in that country:
 - 1. City folks would have seen the sowing as they passed through the country.
 - 2. The seed was probably carried in a bag w/a strap over the shoulder.
 - 3. The sower would walk along and reach into the bag, get a handful of seed and sling them evenly across his path.
- B. The seed were selected very carefully:
 - 1. They would be from the best grain.
 - 2. Special care would be exercised that they were uncontaminated.
 - 3. They would be carefully stored to protect them.
 - 4. Jesus does not place blame on the sower.
- C. The contamination of a crop was punishable under Roman law.
 - 1. Only an enemy would do this:
 - 2. The contamination with dandelion would not be detected until near harvest.
- D. The roots of the dandelion would intertwine w/other plants:
 - 1. One could not pull it up without uprooting other plants.
 - 2. If it were cut out before harvest, one would trample the grain.
- E. The dandelion could not be ignored:
 - 1. It was poisonous, and thus fittingly represents sin.
 - 2. At harvest, it would be taken out before the grain was cut.
 - 3. It was not left on the ground to re-seed--it was burned.

II. JESUS EXPLAINS THE PARABLE FOR THOSE WHO WANTED TO LEARN.

- A. He identified the meaning of the parts of the story (Mt. 13:37-39).
 - 1. "The field is the world." Sometimes the field is identified as the church or kingdom.
 - a. This is probably from the explanation in 13:41.
 - b. The judgment will begin with the church, but extend to the whole world (1Pet. 4:17).
 - 2. "The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one" (13:38).
 - a. The only difference that men can distinguish is the fruit of their lives.
 - b. Jesus said, "by their fruits you shall know them" (Mt. 7:20).
 - 3. "The harvest is the end of the age." Joel had referred to judgment as a harvest (Joel 3:13; see also Rev. 14:14-20).

IV. WE MUST APPLY THIS PARABLE TO THE LORD'S WORK TODAY.

- A. Good and evil will always exist side by side in the world.

1. This is true everywhere we look.
2. Man is not capable of judging the heart of another.
3. Man is not even a reliable judge of his own heart.
 - a. Paul "lived in all good conscience" while persecuting the church (Ac. 23:1).
 - b. Yet, he knew that he could not be justified by what he thought about himself (1Cor. 4:4).
4. Those in the church are not to judge those in the world (1Cor. 5:12-13).
5. We can judge in the church; observed behavior that is witnessed by two or more.
- B. It is a comfort to know that man is not responsible for pulling up the tares, or of judging his fellow man.
 1. First, we are not qualified and would not want that great responsibility.
 2. We would not want others judging us.
 3. X will judge and the angels will separate.
 4. Then God will reign forever.
 5. X will reign until the resurrection and judgment (1Cor. 15:23-26).
- C. We should each examine our own hearts (2Cor. 13:5).
 1. We may be mistaken in our judgment of others as they are in their judgment of us.
 2. Poem given by C.W. Bradley at FHU lectureship in 1993.

I dreamt that death came the other night
 And heaven's gate opened wide.
 With kindly grace an angel ushered me inside.
 And there to my amazement
 Stood folks I'd known on earth.
 Some I felt unfit and of little worth.
 Indignant words came to my lips,
 But never were set free.
 The stunned expression on every face
 Showed no one expected ME.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. When most of us examine our lives, we picture ourselves as wheat rather than tares.
- B. We hope that is the way God looks at us.
- C. May we never become so sure of our standing before God that we become self-satisfied and self-righteous.
- D. If any here today recognize that you need to make changes to stand justified before God, won't you do so now?
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.