

What to do About the Sons of the Devil

Matthew 13: 24-43

#4 in Stories Jesus Told Series

Peter Hiett

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Message

Last week we preached through the “parable of the sower.” In Matthew 13, we noted: God is the sower, Jesus is the seed, and people are made of dirt. Next, in Matthew 13 we read the following:

Matthew 13: 24

He put another parable before them,¹ saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,

Jesus reveals that this parable is about the Kingdom of Heaven.

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds.”

But not just any weeds, *Zizanon*: Darnel or tares

At our Board Bible study, Kathleen and Nick pointed out that the enemy is a “tare”-orist trying to “tare”-ify us . . . and that’s accurate. Jesus says:

Matthew 13: 25b – 27

“ . . . his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain” (literally, “fruit”), then the weeds [tares] appeared also. 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 (tares)?’”

We ask the same question:

²“God, if you’re good and you made the world, what’s with the evil?” Even more specifically, “You made people, what’s with evil people?” What about Adolph Hitler? What about ISIS? Even more pertinent: What about my brother in-law or sister in-law? What about evil people?³

The servants ask the Master about the field, *“How then does it have weeds [tares]?”*

¹ That’s the same phrasing that the Old Testament uses to describe Moses “putting” the law before Israel.

² They recognize a fact that you also recognize. And they ask a question that you ask all the time. They recognize evil. They see evil – that which the Master does not will – in the Master’s field. And they ask, “How did it get there?”

³ Several years ago, my wife Susan had been praying over a certain person in a certain difficult situation when she had a vision. She saw a stalk of wheat and then a weed that began to choke out the stalk. One day, as she pondered the vision she heard a voice. It said, “Be afraid. Be very afraid.” Later we learned that voice was not the voice of God.

Matthew 13: 28

"[The Master] said to [His servants], 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'"

"Shall we go root them out? Shall we go fix the situation?"

Matthew 13: 29 - 30a

"But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds [tares] you root up the wheat along with them.'"

And now this is His strategy: verse 30

"Let. . ."

Ephete, from *ephiemi*. It means "leave," but is also translated, "suffer," and even more often it's translated "forgive."

"Do NOTHING but LET."

I think that may be your primary problem with God. He lets tares grow.

I think that was their primary problem with Jesus. He lets tares grow.

I think that's the reason most folks recoil at the idea of God saving everyone.

They think, "How could God let tares into the Kingdom of Heaven?"

Well, Jesus continues telling His story.

Matthew 13: 30-31 (ESV)

But [the Master] said, "LET both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'Gather the weeds [tares] first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." ^{4 5}

Critics like to point out that mustard seeds aren't the smallest of all seeds and a mustard seed grows into more of a bush, not a *dendron*, - a tree. But I wonder if Jesus means that the Kingdom is the smallest of all kingdoms, for its King has made Himself the smallest of all kings.

⁴ If you're in to end-times prophecies or parades, if you like making a big splash, if you despise small and seemingly insignificant things, it's important to note what Jesus says here.

⁵ The Kingdom is like a little seed. It comes small like a little seed, a little decision, a little word. Alice Grey writes:

You can offer your ideas to others as bullets or as seeds. You can shoot them, or sow them; hit people in the head with them, or plant them in their hearts. The kingdom is like a little mustard seed that grows into a tree, with birds in its branches. That's an Old Testament picture of a Great Kingdom.

In the Great Divorce, C. S. Lewis writes:

Only the Greatest of all can make Himself small enough to enter Hell. For the higher a thing is, the lower it can descend – a man can sympathize with a horse, but a horse cannot sympathize with a rat. Only One has descended into Hell.”

Jesus made Himself “*least of all*” (Matthew 13: 32). Then He was enthroned on a *dendron*—a tree that we call the cross. And now God has “*highly exalted him that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess.*” (Philippians 2: 10).

Next Verse: Matthew 13:33

*He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”*⁶

When harvested grapes and harvested wheat (that is dead grapes and dead wheat) are mixed with living leaven, they produce bread and wine.

Jesus took bread saying, “*This is my body,*” and wine saying, “*This is my blood.*” It’s the “*Harvest of the earth*” and we are the harvest of this earth.

So, for now, we may not see the Kingdom, and so it’s easy to despair. We think, “It’s so little and it’s so inconsequential.” But Jesus says: “It’s little, like a seed is little, BUT it will get very, very big. And it’s hidden, like leaven is hidden, BUT it can’t be stopped and will leaven ‘all things.’ And, by the way, it’s already hidden in the dough.”

A baker mixes the leaven with the flour before he adds the water and makes dough. It’s distributed throughout the dough from the very beginning. And it grows until it is *all* leavened, not part leavened . . . but *ALL* leavened.⁷

⁶ Leaven is yeast and yeast is alive . . . and small, it’s a single-celled organism. It makes bread rise and turns grapes into wine.

It makes bread rise by producing carbon dioxide, as you do when you breathe.

The leaven of the Pharisees was “bad breath.”

The leaven of the Kingdom is “good breath,” like God’s breath.

Yeast makes bread rise and grape juice turns into wine.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the two classic examples of fermentation are in the production of bread and wine.

It’s interesting that according to the Revelation, the Prophets, and the Gospels, grain and grapes are the “harvest of the earth.”

⁷ So, when a missionary goes to a foreign country, he doesn’t bring the leaven or the Kingdom. It’s already there. He doesn’t bring it; he reveals it, like Paul revealed it in Acts 17: 23 in Athens, when he said to the Athenians, “*What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you this day . . . and God has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man – this man.*”

In Galatians 1: 16, speaking of his call and conversion, Paul writes that God was “pleased to reveal his son in me.” As if Jesus had been there all along, like leaven hidden in dough.

It cannot be stopped.

- In the first parable, the enemy can't even damage the wheat – only tare-ify and confuse the workers in the hope that they'll damage the wheat.
- In the second and third parable there isn't even any opposition. The Kingdom will come and it cannot be stopped. Next verse:

Matthew 13: 34-35

All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

That's Psalm 78, which recounts the story of Israel. So, the Kingdom of Israel is a parable about the Kingdom of God. And the WHOLE creation is a parable about the Promised Seed – The King, and the wonder of His Kingdom.

You can just hear Jesus' excitement, can't you? "Guys! Just look at the wonders of My Kingdom! I know it's small and hidden, and it cannot be stopped, but it's everywhere, it will grow, and it cannot be stopped."

Matthew 13: 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 [tares] of the field."

They say, "Explain the parable of the tares." But Jesus had called it a parable of "the Kingdom." It's like they're saying, "That's nice about the Kingdom and all, but back up, we have some questions about the weeds." "Jesus, about that first parable, we think maybe we heard you wrong . . . or maybe Jesus, you told the story wrong."

WE DO THAT:

"Lord, we think these Scriptures are wrong – you're telling it wrong."

"That part about fire falling on Sodom . . . surely, that's an antiquated metaphorical, culturally and unenlightened way to look at things."

"And that part about sex . . . clearly, that doesn't take into account what we now know about repression, psychology, and the influence of genetics."

"And that part about blessed are the poor, surely you meant blessed are the capitalists."

"We think you may be telling the story wrong."

Well, I've come to believe that Scripture is remarkably accurate, and when we're in a pinch, the only way out is *through*.

The WAY out isn't taking Scripture *less* literally (for lack of a better word), but more literally!

And if Jesus really is the Word of God, breathed into us at creation, that would make some sense. So Jesus is like a living infection of goodness in a world that has died. He will grow until the whole world is leavened.

In the words of Isaiah (9:7), "His kingdom will have no end."

And I think Jesus would agree. They say, "Jesus, could you retell the part about the weeds?" And it's like Jesus says, "You asked for it. And now you're going to get it. And you need to get it."

Matthew 13: 37-43

He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man."

That's a bit wild, considering our last parable. It's like Jesus is God. And Jesus is the Seed and He sows Himself in the world . . . And how would He do that?

. . . "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The [tares] are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds [tares] are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place 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."

"You wanted to know AND so there you go!"

And now we're all in something of a crisis . . . a *KRISIS* in Greek.

Who are the "sons of the Kingdom"

"Who are the "Sons of the devil?"

And "What do we do about it?"

Let's map it out: Jesus teaches that there are two things growing in the world.

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| <u>Sons of the Kingdom</u> | <u>Sons of the Devil</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | |

The sons of the Kingdom and the sons of the devil.

| <u>Sons of the Kingdom</u> | <u>Sons of the Devil</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wheat | Tares: Imitation Wheat |
| | |

They are like wheat and tares.

[Image with wheat on one side and tares on the other (They look very similar)]
That's wheat on the left and tares on the right. You see? Tares look like wheat.

| <u>Sons of the Kingdom</u> | <u>Sons of the Devil</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wheat | Tares: Imitation Wheat |
| Bear Fruit | Fake Fruit |

Wheat bears fruit: “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith, and self-control.” Tares grow fruit, but not good fruit, fake fruit. Looks like love, joy, peace, but really it’s more like lust, jealousy, and fear. Tares look like children of God, but actually, they are children of the devil.

| <u>Sons of the Kingdom</u> | <u>Sons of the Devil</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wheat | Tares: Imitation Wheat |
| Bear Fruit | Fake Fruit |
| The Creation of God | The Product of the Devil |

Sons of the Kingdom are the creation of God. Sons of the devil are the product of the accuser, the devil.

| <u>Sons of the Kingdom</u> | <u>Sons of the Devil</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wheat | Tares: Imitation Wheat |
| Bear Fruit | Fake Fruit |
| The Creation of God | The Product of the Devil |
| Have a Soul | Have no Soul |

Sons of the Kingdom have a soul enlivened by the Spirit of God – the Spirit of Jesus – they actually are the Body of Jesus. Sons of the devil have no soul, - for they have no spirit of God. They have no love and are incapable of love. God is love. I think they are what Paul describes in Romans 9: 22 “vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.”

Years ago, I was talking about this with my dad. And he said, “Peter, I once had a nightmare that someone I knew was a vessel of wrath with no soul and I woke up horrified.” And I said, “Dad, I don’t think it could’ve been someone that you knew, for if it were a tare, there would be no one there to know . . .” “It might look like a person, but there is no person to know.” Understand? Tares look like wheat but they are an entirely different species.

Sons of the Kingdom

Wheat
Bear Fruit
The Creation of God
Have a Soul
Eternally Secure

Sons of the Devil

Tares: Imitation Wheat
Fake Fruit
The Product of the Devil
Have no Soul
Destined for Destruction

So “sons of the Kingdom” don’t need to worry about turning into tares. I mean no matter how bad a stalk of wheat might be, it can never ever turn into a tare. Wheat is eternally secure, “once wheat, always wheat!” And likewise, no matter how wheat-like a stalk of tare might act, it can never ever turn into wheat. It is destined for destruction and cannot be saved. It is hopeless, beyond redemption and cannot convert.

In Isaiah 66, (and remember, Jesus has been quoting Isaiah) the children of God look out on the New Jerusalem and see bodies in the Valley of Gehenna burning in unquenchable fire and being eaten by the worm that will not die. Those bodies must be the “*sons of the devil*.”

But now, according to Jesus, *they* are in our midst. So Jesus is validating all of our very worst fears. Every culture on the face of the earth has legends about evil beings, like these “sons of the devil,” that leave people “tare –ified” beings such as skin walkers, doppelgangers, Golem or the product of mad scientists, like Mr. Hyde, Body Snatchers, aliens having taken human form, vampires that look human, but have no soul, zombies that look alive, but are truly dead, evil robots from the future, incapable of love.

Jesus teaches that they are among us! And not just among us (in the world), but among us (in the wheat) the Church!! Right now. Right here in this room. So look around:

[Ominous music starts to play, getting louder and louder as Peter speaks louder and louder.]

They look like us and not us. They’re among us. What are you going to do about that?
Get nervous? Be tare-ified?
Try to root them out?
Launch an investigation?
Pass some legislation?
Start an inquisition?
Declare war and drop some bombs?
They’re among us and would you like to know who they are??? Would you??

Music stops.

Jesus tells us who they are, or what they are, because I’m not sure you can even call them “*people*.” . . . “*uios*”—son can refer to animals and “*autous*”—them can be an impersonal pronoun.

Well, In Matthew 13, verse 41, Jesus says, “*The reapers will gather out of the Master’s Kingdom*” “*all causes of sin and all those doing lawlessness*.” So, in a minute, I’ll have you raise your hand if you’ve ever caused someone to sin or ever broke the law, which means you probably still break the law because tares don’t convert.

The law is this: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself.”* So, if you ever have *not* done that, raise your hand. That’s “Tare-ifying.”

So, is there any wheat at all? Are there any sons of the Kingdom?

You’ll remember that Jesus said to the crowd on the hillside when you pray, say, *“Our Father,”* and I don’t think Jesus would tell us to lie. So, if you’ve ever prayed, *“Our Father, who art in Heaven,”* well, you are a son or daughter of the King and His Kingdom.

On Pentecost, Peter stood up and said, *“Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* So right now, on the count of three, say, *“Jesus.”* Say, *“God help me!”* (That’s what the name “Jesus” means: *“Yahweh save.”*) Well, if you said that, you are a son or daughter of the Kingdom; a “self-made man” would not say that, but you just said that, so raise your hand. That’s a bit confusing . . .

Well, let’s look at 1 John, for 1 John makes it very clear.

1 John 3: 4-9a

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God’s seed, Sperma, in Greek. It’s the same word Jesus uses in our parable. It’s interesting that this word is never used of the devil. God sows sperma, but the devil sows something else. He has no sperma.

1 John 3: 9

Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God’s seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God.

Did you get that? They can’t sin, which means they have no desire to sin, which means they only will the good and they do it in freedom.

1 John 3: 10

The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is right are not from God, nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters.

He says it, even more simply:

1 John 4: 7-8

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

So, if you've ever loved . . . ever at all . . . raise your hand.
You, my friend, are a child of God!

And now, if you've ever *not* loved . . . raise your hand.
Wow! How do you explain that?

You know, unless you think the Bible was written by complete idiots, how can you avoid the conclusion that each of us are like wheat and tare, or a field containing both wheat and tares.

And I hope you see what this means:

You are your own darkest fear.
You are your own worst nightmare.
And all our monsters are projections of ourselves.

This week I kept thinking, "I've seen this concept somewhere before." And then I remembered one of the most insightful movies ever produced. Some of you young people will be unfamiliar with this. But, this is a philosophical classic that clearly should have won several Academy awards. [Said with much sarcasm]

[A clip is show from *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey* in which Bill and Ted meet another version of themselves that is supposedly trying to protect them. Not knowing that these other versions of themselves are robots, they agree to go with them for protection. They go on a journey and once they are out in the middle of nowhere they realize they have been duped. They soon learn the "Bill" and "Ted" that they thought they could trust are evil robotic versions of themselves that have been programmed to kill the real Bill and Ted.]

That's *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*. It's the sequel to *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, wherein Bill and Ted travel through time and their future selves help their current selves. See? It turns out that, in the future, Bill and Ted's music brings an end to war and poverty, aligns the planets, and brings harmony between all creatures. In the future, Bill and Ted exercise perfect dominion over all creation. But, there is an evil usurper who hates their music, so he creates evil robots to travel back in time and destroy, (and I quote) "all of Bill and Ted's relationships."

In the next scene Bill and Ted tell Evil Bill and Evil Ted that they "love them" hoping they'll stop trying to kill them, but it does no good, because they're not human, they're evil robots. Bill and Ted call them the evil "us"-es. And I think that's what tares are; they are evil "us"-es. Only satan didn't make them. He doesn't have that power. He gets us to make them and he does it with a lie.

In the beginning God said, "*Let us make men in our own image*," not "SOME men" in our image "and some an evil distortion of our image." He said, "*Let us make humanity in our own image and let them have dominion over all creation*." In the future, we *will*. And in eternity we already do. Yet, an evil usurper hates that most harmonious of all music and so on the sixth day, while we are still being created, the serpent lies to Eve about the goodness of God and tempts all of us to take from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in order to make ourselves in the image of God. He tempts us to take knowledge of the good to judge the good and make *ourselves* good, but God alone is good. So, of course, we can't make ourselves in God's image. We can only make *false* selves (*imitation* selves). Jesus will look at those selves and say, "*Depart from me, I never knew you*" (Matthew 7: 13). And what is it that the Word of God has never known? He doesn't know a lie, for He is the truth.

In John 8: 44, to a group of religious Jews, that is people that believed they could take the law (“the knowledge of good and evil”) and with their own will and own judgment make themselves righteous in the image of God . . . to them Jesus says,

John 8:44

“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in Him. When he lies he speaks out of his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Did you get that? Satan is not the father of people (He has no “sperma.”) (He has no truth and no breath of God.) Satan is the father of lies and he sows lies in our dirt – our hearts. Then, in fear and shame, we construct a false person. That false self may act like it loves – because the law tells it that it should love, - but bite into that fruit and you’ll find it not love, but fear. We can’t make ourselves love. God is love and so love always comes to us as grace. So, we – (the true “us”es) are created one hundred percent by Grace.

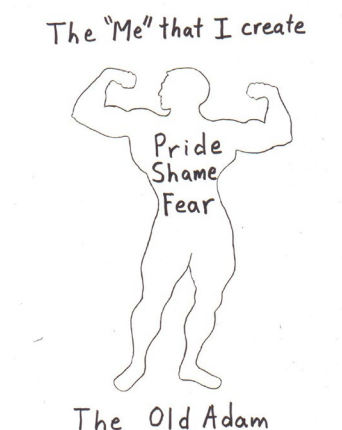
We spent a year and a half preaching through Ephesians, and I hope you remember how Paul taught that we all have an old man condemned to death and we all have a new man – eternal and seated with Christ. We all have a false man constructed with lies and we all have a true man – constructed with truth.

In Ephesians 2: 4, he writes:

“We were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.”

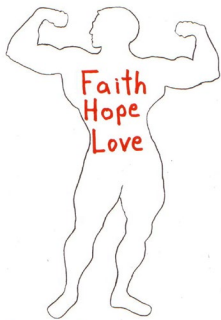
We all were and seem to have vessels of wrath. Paul also calls it the ‘body of death.’ I think it may actually be this body of flesh that I have constructed by eating life and excreting death. (I mean it’s pretty disgusting if you think about it.) Paul writes, *“Don’t be fooled flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”* So there is a humanity that God creates and an imitation humanity that we create – (the evil “us”-es). Maybe you remember these pictures:

There is a “me” that I create with pride, shame and fear.



And there is a me that God creates with faith, hope, and love.

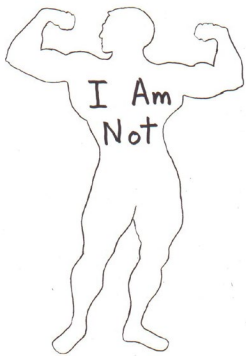
The "Me" that GOD creates



The New Adam

There is a me that is false.

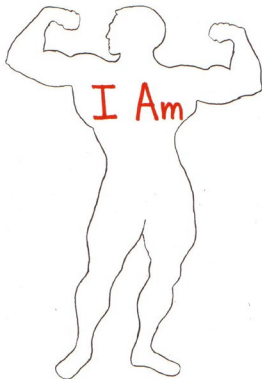
The "Me" that I create



The Old Adam

And there is a me that is true.

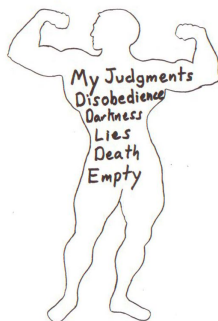
The "Me" that GOD creates



The New Adam

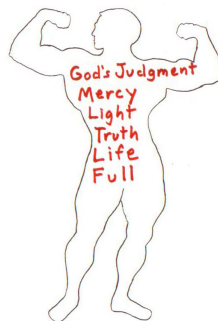
There is a me that I have created with *my* judgment:

The "Me" that I create



The Old Adam

The "Me" that GOD creates



The New Adam

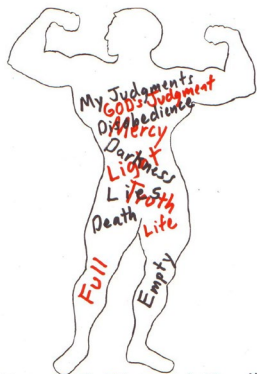
Disobedience, darkness, lies and death.

And there is a me that God has created with His Judgment: Mercy, Light, Truth and Life.

One is wheat and one is tare.

And in this life, where I am being created in time,

Me being created
in Space and Time

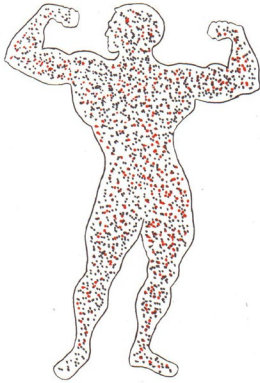


"Putting Off The Old Man"
and "Putting On The New Man"

I have both growing in my field.

- Every time I make a good decision (called love), that decision is God's decision growing in me, - God's Judgment—good judgment.
- Every time I make a bad decision (that is *not* love), that's the manifestation of the lie growing in my dirt, my flesh – my judgment, bad judgment.

So the wheat and tares in me look something like this:



And now, how can I root out the tares? How can I judge all these judgments? With what judgment would I judge . . . without making more bad judgments, which only uproot the wheat and are, in fact, the tares.
So what am I to do????

My self is my own greatest fear.
My self is my own worst nightmare.
My self is my own deepest prison.

So, what should my self do with myself??

If I kill myself, that's only more self. I'm tare-ified of myself and with myself.
I see that when I ask the Sower, "How can you allow evil in the world?"
I'm asking, "How can you allow me in your world?"
How can you let me be?
I must do something!

So the disciples come to Jesus asking, "*What are we to do about the weeds?*" and He says, "*Let*" the weeds; "*suffer*" the weeds; "*ephiemi*," "*forgive*" the weeds – "*Let*" both grow and Do Nothing. *Stop, Shabbat, Sabbath* means *do nothing*.

Now, I know that really bothers some of you, but please remember that it's not me that's offending you. It's Jesus.

"You must do nothing – you can do nothing"

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

Yet, when I see that I can do nothing, it does something in me.

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

- I stop living in fear.

I preached on this parable once before, over eleven years ago, and for eleven years it's sat in my gut, like a seed, and I think it's really changed me. The more I believe it, the less I hear the theme song from Jaws playing in the background of my life.

I stop living in fear.

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

- I stop living in fear.

I know that the tares are a lie about other people, and they are a lie about me, and in the end, God will separate – God will judge.

In Isaiah 66, the bodies that are consumed by eternal fire and eaten by the worm that eats death are the *dead* bodies of all men, including the Messiah (who is numbered with them). And yet, all men watch this happen in new bodies – new flesh, giving praise to God for his mercy.

They stand in the New Jerusalem (It's a storehouse, like a barn). Zachariah says that it will be surrounded by a wall of fire that is God Himself. You see? The harvest is in the barn, - New Jerusalem, and the tares are consumed with fire, in Gehenna, and we all worship, for God has freed us from our greatest fear, our worst nightmare, and our deepest prison, which was our selves, our pride, our shame, our ego, our old self.

When I believe the story, I stop living in fear and I stop blaming...

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

- I stop living in fear.
- I stop blaming.

myself or others.

I mean every good decision in me is the life of God rising in me, absolute gift and eternally secure. And every bad decision in me is already condemned. So there's nothing to protect,

nothing to defend, and nothing to hide. I'm not responsible for creating the new me and the old me is already condemned at the cross, and that's true for all humanity – as Paul writes "*Because one has died, all have died.*"

So, I stop blaming and I stop competing

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

- I stop living in fear.
- I stop blaming.
- I stop competing.

No man is my enemy. The accuser is my enemy and he's a walking lie – the presence of an absence.

I stop hating

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

- I stop living in fear.
- I stop blaming.
- I stop competing.
- I stop hating.

I don't want anyone to be tortured and everyone to be set free. You know, a farmer doesn't torture weeds. He has no interest in pouring out eternal wrath on a pile of dead weeds. He simply destroys the weeds and enjoys the grain. You know, God *enjoys* me, the real me, not the false me that I create in fear and shame.

I think this may be the most wonderfully surprising thing about our Father. He will never ever enjoy your act as much as he enjoys you, - the real you. He knows that you're incomplete and not yet finished. He knows everything you try to hide. It turns out that you're far more inadequate than you think you are. And He adores you as you are, - without any fig leaves. He actually hates your act and adores the real you, the inadequate and naked you, for He makes you adequate and He clothes you with Himself. He is your righteousness.

So I stop acting

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

- I stop living in fear.
- I stop blaming.
- I stop competing.
- I stop hating.
- I stop acting.
- I start living.

And I start living
Freely.

And I start loving

**When I hear the story Jesus told,
I see that I can do *nothing*,
but it does *something*, in me:**

- I stop living in fear.
- I stop blaming.
- I stop competing.
- I stop hating.
- I stop acting.
- I start living.
- I start loving.

I have compassion. I know that I'm surrounded by wheat and we all suffer the tares.
I know that in every person, that's any person, there is a brother or sister imprisoned in a lie.

I used to wonder if there were soulless people, sheer vessels of wrath, nothing but false self,
but, you see, a false self must be a lie about a true self.

So even in the worst person (the very last and least . . .), even though it's hidden like leaven in dough or buried like a little seed in a field, there is a King for me to love and a Kingdom that will grow for: "*where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.*"

You see? Sin is my judgment; it's a dead, dark, and empty lie. And Grace is God's Judgment; it's Life, Light, Truth, and the Word of God.

When I believe the story Jesus told:

I surrender my judgments to God's judgments.

I don't need to judge, and I start, and I start hoping that God will judge.

He will destroy the tares.

He will destroy the work of the devil.

He will destroy lies by flooding them with Truth.

He will destroy the dark with Light.

He will destroy death with Life.

He will destroy lawlessness with Love. (Love fully fills the law.)

He will fill the nothing with His something. He is I AM.

I start hoping in God's Judgment.

How sick is it that we've been taught to run from our Father's Judgment, when our Father's Judgment is the Word of Love that creates us in His image.

I start hoping in God's Judgment and surrender my Judgment to God's and I'm filled with God's Judgment.

Why do you suppose the disciples went back and asked Jesus about the weeds?

Maybe they questioned God's Judgment.

Maybe they were a bit terrified and wanted to judge others.

Maybe they were a bit terrified about themselves and wanted to judge themselves.

"Oh God, am I a tare?"

"Give me more knowledge of good and evil so I can judge my tares, condemn my tares, uproot my tares and save myself."

Do you see? That very desire is the tare, the product of the lie.

Jesus told them not to dig up the tares but "*Seek first the kingdom.*" They ignored everything about the kingdom and just worried about the tares. So, Jesus retells the story—but turns up the volume saying, "The harvest is the *syntellia*—the close—the full end of the age: "*Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire so will it be at the end of the age.*" God will harvest at the "*end of the age.*" God will judge.

In John 7:19 Jesus says, "*This is the judgment: The light has come into the world.*"

Jesus is the Light. As the disciples sat in the Light, I wonder if their tares were being exposed—already starting to burn.

In Matthew 9 He had just told them: "*Look! The harvest is plentiful*"—not *will* be plentiful but *is* plentiful. So, when is the "*end of the age?*"

1 Corinthians 10:11 "*On us, the end of the ages has come,*" writes Paul.

Hebrews 9:26 "*As it is, Christ has appeared once for all at the syntellia—the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*"

In John 12 Jesus says, "*Now is the judgment of this world, and when I'm lifted up, I will draw all men to myself.*"

And when He was lifted up on the *dendron*—the tree, when He suffered all the bad judgments of all people for all time, He lifted His head and issued God's judgment. He cried, "*Father forgive them*"—*aphiemi*—"Let them—suffer them—forgive them."

That is the Judgment at the end of the age.

That is the Great White Throne Judgment.

That is the Judgment of the sheep and goats—wheat and tares.

That is the Light of the world on a stand for all to see.

If you think you are your own judgments, if you think you are a "self-made man," that Judgment will burn you as unquenchable fire, for it is unquenchable fire, it's the Word of God – Grace. But if you think you are God's Judgment created by His choice, His decision, His Word – Grace, then you will begin to sing with the angels and praise God with tongues of fire (a man on fire). God's Judgment is God's Word and God's Word is Jesus. God's Judgment is Grace. Jesus hung on the cross and issued final judgment. He is Final Judgment.

That Judgment may seem small in this world, and yet that Judgment cannot be stopped. It's hidden in every flower, every sunset, every smile, and every tear.

It's hidden in every particle of creation and it's growing and cannot be stopped.
It will burn away the tares and cause the righteous to shine like the sun.

The tare is a lie about you, and "the righteousness of Christ," *is* you. "*Seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness*" and stop trying to dig up tares.

Paul wrote, "*It's a very small thing that I'm judged by any of you or any human court. I don't even judge myself.*" Does that mean he's just fine with sin? Hell, no! He hates the tares and doesn't want the tares. He just knows he can't dig them out. In Romans 7, he writes, "*Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" "*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord . . . there is therefore now no condemnation . . .*"

Sometimes I feel like I'm going insane trying to dig up my tares. "Was I too controlling? Was I too passive?" "Am I working too much? Am I being too lazy?" "Was that lust? Or was it love?" "If I root out lust, will I root out love?" "And if I root out alcohol, will I root out communion?" "Have I given enough? And if I ask that question, Have I given at all, even loved at all? "I'm worried about me because I'm always thinking of me. What's wrong with me?" I think Jesus is saying, "Peter, Peter, stop worrying about your judgments (and judging your judgments with more of your judgments) and look at my Judgment."

Communion

So He took the bread and He broke it, saying, "This is my body broken for you. Eat it, and do it in remembrance of me. And in the same way, He took the cup and He said, "*This cup is the covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me.*"

I think He's saying, "This isn't your judgment. This is *my* Judgment on all your judgments. I forgive you. I always have and always will. I love you, for I am love. This is not something you do, but this will do something in you, and it becomes you. And then it *is* something you do. I want you to eat my Judgment, and my Judgment will become your judgment, the judgment of Love. The dark cup is wine; the light cup is juice. They are both the Judgment of God.

Benediction

God is the Sower.

Jesus is the Seed. (Peter tears off a piece of the bread and dips it in the wine), and we are the dirt. (Peter places it in his mouth and eats it.) That was kind of small. And now it's hidden (Peter gestures to his belly). And if you're like me, maybe you think this next, "But God, I have some tares. So, I'm kind of worried about me." And you start thinking about Me! And you say, "Yeah, Peter! You don't get it! I really hate the tares! I don't like the tares! Say this to Jesus, "Jesus I want to get rid of them, I mean I like them and I don't like them, but I hate the tares!"

You see, I think He looks at you and He says, "I know! That's good that you hate the tares because the tares are a lie and I AM the truth. But now listen closely: "*Seek first the kingdom, and my righteousness...*" and stop trying to root up the tares."

You see, that's the Gospel. Every day, sit before Jesus, in the presence of Jesus, in the presence of the Gospel, the Good News and He'll judge the hell out of you! And that's the best news! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.