

While We Sleep



Mike Spaulding

He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away." –Matthew 13:24-25

The passage of Holy Scripture above comes from a collection of parables that Jesus used to describe different aspects of the kingdom of God, sometimes referred to as the kingdom of heaven. The entire collection in Matthew 13 is referred to as The Kingdom Parables.

Jesus explained the meaning of this parable to His disciples in verses 36-43 of Chapter 13. He is the man who sowed good seed in the field. The seed is His disciples. The field is the world. The tares are Satan's slaves, i.e., the unredeemed, and the sower of the unredeemed is Satan himself.

And he answered and said, The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom, and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are the angels.[\[1\]](#)

What this means by extension and application is that Satan's servants populate the world and are even found within the church. These infiltrators sit on church boards and occupy prominent positions of authority and power within many

Christian ministries. However, their doom is certain as Jesus states clearly.

Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.[\[2\]](#)

The question that must be asked at this point is, what should God's sons and daughters be doing about this situation? Specifically, what should Christians do about false converts within the body of Christ?

Some have suggested based on Jesus' parable that Christians should do nothing about the enemies of God strategically located within churches and other Christian ministries. They base this on Jesus' own words.

And the slaves of the land owner came and said to him, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? And he said to them, An enemy has done this! And the slaves said to him, Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up? But he said, No, lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.[\[3\]](#)

Was Jesus teaching that unredeemed people, those who are enemies of Jesus Christ, should remain untouched within various assemblies of believers across the world? That is not what He was teaching at all.

We are instructed throughout the Scriptures to expose darkness, to judge sin, to fight against wickedness wherever it is found. Unredeemed, unrepentant enemies of Jesus Christ

within the church should not surprise us, but we should not sit back and allow them to remain in their unregenerate state.

Consider these examples of identifying and opposing tares.

Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; [\[4\]](#)

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. [\[5\]](#)

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. [\[6\]](#)

Then the Lord said to me, The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds. [\[7\]](#)

But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. [\[8\]](#)

Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; And they strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah. [\[9\]](#)

Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. [\[10\]](#)

He who hates disguises *it* with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart.

When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart. *Though his* hatred covers itself with guile,
His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.[\[11\]](#)

For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.[\[12\]](#)

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.[\[13\]](#)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.[\[14\]](#)

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.[\[15\]](#)

Lo, God will not reject a *man of* integrity, Nor will He support the evildoers.[\[16\]](#)

Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But those who keep the law strive with them. Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the Lord understand all things.[\[17\]](#)

You have rejected all those who wander from Your statutes, For their deceitfulness is useless.[\[18\]](#)

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.[\[19\]](#)

Reject a factious man after a first and second warning.[\[20\]](#)

This list is not exhaustive by any means. Clearly, the Scriptures have much to say to us about opposing evil. Why then, do so many Christians refuse to resist, reject, expose, and warn about the evil not just in the world but in the church?

There are many reasons that Christians offer for their disobedience to the commands of Scripture concerning tares. One reason I hear often is that it is not their job to combat wickedness. This assumes that there is a singular office, position, job description for a specially called believer who addresses evil on behalf of other people, often entire congregations. What people normally mean by this excuse is that it is the pastor's responsibility to do all those things. I have a one-word response to that: bologna! You will search the Scriptures in vain to find anything remotely suggesting that only the pastor must fight against wickedness in the church or elsewhere.

Another excuse I often hear here is that people are afraid to offend others by confronting them about their wickedness and their need to repent and receive Christ by faith. Friends, the responsibility of every born-again believer who is a seed sown by Jesus in the field of this world, is to tell others about their future apart from Christ. We are to warn them of the judgment to come.

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment. [\[21\]](#)

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of

life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.[\[22\]](#)

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.[\[23\]](#)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.[\[24\]](#)

Understanding the judgment that is coming upon the entire human race should be enough to motivate Christians to tell others about the free gift of salvation[\[25\]](#) that the Creator offers to everyone who will believe and receive the Son, Jesus Christ. Sadly, it is not. To those people whom believe they are safe and secure in Jesus' loving arms even though they are disobedient to His commands to go into all the world and make disciples from among all the nations, teaching them to observe the commands of Jesus, I say this: repent of your callous heart toward the lost and perishing all around you. Repent of your naivety in believing that sins of omission are somehow less egregious than sins of commission.

Some will receive that as harsh. If that is you, then I encourage you to seek the Lord truthfully about your spiritual state. It is not someone else's responsibility to warn the wicked. I've been looking for someone else for a long time and I've come to conclude that he or she is a figment of your imagination. Someone else does not exist.

You however, if you name the name of Christ as savior, have been called out of the darkness and have been given the responsibility to call others to come to the light which is Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter said this very thing in his first epistle.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,

a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; [\[26\]](#)

We read this exhortation in 2 Timothy 4:1-4:

I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Friends, it is time to awaken from the slumbers that American materialism has utilized to mesmerize the body of Christ. We are not serving our heavenly Father by showing up for a weekly meeting with other believers, dropping a few dollars in an offering plate, or saying bedtime prayers with our children. The world in which we live is sliding rapidly into chaos. Christians have the only message of hope that can truly transform a human heart and subsequently a life. Let's make sure that the tares within our reach become stalks of wheat ready for the harvest to come.

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Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) Matthew 13:37-39. All Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible, Lockman Foundation.

[\[2\]](#) Matthew 13:40-42.

[\[3\]](#) Matthew 13:27-30.

[\[4\]](#) Ephesians 5:11.

[\[5\]](#) Acts 20:28-31.

[\[6\]](#) Matthew 7:15

[\[7\]](#) Jeremiah 14:14.

[\[8\]](#) Ephesians 5:13.

[\[9\]](#) Jeremiah 23:14.

[\[10\]](#) Matthew 24:11.

[\[11\]](#) Proverbs 26:24-26.

[\[12\]](#) Mark 13:22.

[\[13\]](#) 2 Peter 2:1.

[\[14\]](#) 1 John 4:1.

[\[15\]](#) 2 John 1:7.

[\[16\]](#) Job 8:20.

[\[17\]](#) Proverbs 28:4-5.

[\[18\]](#) Psalm 119:118.

[\[19\]](#) 2 Timothy 3:8.

[\[20\]](#) Titus 3:10.

[\[21\]](#) Hebrews 9:27.

[\[22\]](#) John 5:25-29.

[\[23\]](#) Romans 2:5.

[\[24\]](#) 2 Corinthians 5:10.

[\[25\]](#) Romans 6:23.

[\[26\]](#) 1 Peter 2:9.