



Small Group Guide: The Wheat and the Weeds

Based on Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 || Pastor Tom Lanning

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. God has planted you where you are for a purpose - Your location, timing, and circumstances are not accidents.
2. Not all who appear to be Christians are truly following Christ - The weeds (false believers) look very similar to the wheat (true believers).
3. Salvation is by faith alone, not by works - It's not about what you do, but about who you know and trust.
4. You can have complete assurance of your salvation - The Bible promises that believers can know with certainty they have eternal life.
5. Fruit is evidence, not the cause, of salvation - Good works flow from salvation; they don't earn it.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43 together. What stands out to you most from this parable?
2. Why do you think Jesus used the imagery of wheat and weeds that look so similar? What does this teach us about spiritual discernment?
3. The workers wanted to pull up the weeds immediately. Why did the landowner tell them to wait? What does this reveal about God's character and timing?
4. Pastor Tom stated that 54-70% of people who call themselves Christians don't believe Jesus is the only way to God. Why do you think this is happening in our culture? How do we respond to this with both truth and grace?
5. Pastor Tom said, "While the church has been sleeping, Satan has been awake." What do you think this means? In what areas might the church (or we personally) be "asleep"?
6. Have you ever struggled with assurance of your salvation? What causes doubt, and how does understanding salvation by faith alone help address that doubt?
7. Pastor Tom emphasized that we're planted where we are for a purpose. Share with the group: Where has God planted you right now (work, neighborhood, family situation)? How might God want to use you there?
8. Read 1 John 5:1-5. According to this passage, how can we know we are children of God? Why does John say God's commands are "not burdensome"?
9. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23 that not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" will enter heaven. How is this different from salvation by works? What's the distinction between doing things "for" Jesus versus doing things "in" Jesus?
10. Pastor Tom mentioned that fruit is the byproduct of having the Holy Spirit, not what makes you a child of God. What fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) have you seen growing in your life since you came to faith? Where do you still need growth?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

For Everyone:

- **Fruit Inspection:** Honestly assess your spiritual fruit. Are you more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled than you were a year ago? Journal about areas of growth and areas that need attention.
- **Purpose Check:** Write down the specific places God has planted you (workplace, neighborhood, family, hobbies, etc.). Pray and ask God to show you one specific way He wants to use you in each place this week.
- **Assurance Study:** Read through 1 John this week (it's only 5 chapters). Underline or highlight every verse that talks about "knowing" you have eternal life or are a child of God.

For Those Questioning Their Salvation:

- **Settle It:** If you've never truly surrendered your life to Jesus or you're unsure, talk to your small group leader, a pastor, or a mature Christian friend this week. Don't leave this unresolved.
- **Prayer of Commitment:** Use the prayer model from the sermon to surrender your life to Christ: Acknowledge you're a sinner, believe Jesus died for your sins and rose again, and commit to following Him.

For Established Believers:

- **Share Your Story:** Identify one person in your sphere of influence who may be a "weed" (someone who thinks church attendance or good deeds will save them). Pray for an opportunity to share the true gospel with them this week.
- **Baptism Consideration:** If you've accepted Christ but never been baptized, sign up for the next baptism service to publicly declare your faith.

Memory Verse

1 John 5:13 - "I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."