

# Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven

## Matthew 13:24-43 | The Parable of the Weeds

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

Stories help us make sense of ourselves, each other, and the world around us. It should be no surprise then that approximately one-third of Jesus' teachings in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) are in the form of stories - or as we know them - parables. Parables help deepen and reveal truth. Think of them as earthly stories with heavenly meaning.

Last week we studied the Parable of the Sower, where Jesus taught us that someone's heart posture is going to determine how they respond to God's Word. Ultimately our job as followers of Jesus is to spread the message of the kingdom of heaven and pray it lands on good soil. Jesus invites us to build God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, where He can produce growth.

Remember that Matthew is written for a Jewish audience to highlight Jesus as the promised Messiah that they had been waiting for. Jesus taught those listening to him that the Kingdom of Heaven will look different than they expected, which we saw as we studied the Sermon on the Mount. True Kingdom people store up treasures in heaven and not on earth. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21).

As we continue to study these different parables, remember that we are a part of God's story - a story where He is restoring and redeeming all things. We learned in Genesis that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, where God and man were together, and it was good. But quickly humans rebelled against God and distorted His good world. Despite our rebellion, out of God's love & mercy, He sent Jesus to redeem us back to Him through his life, death, and resurrection. This is what Easter is all about! And one day Jesus will return again to bring about the new heavens and the new earth, where God and man are together again, and evil is no more. As we wait for that glorious day, let's see what Jesus has to say in his parables from Matthew 13.

**Read: Matthew 13:24-43 (NIV)**

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. What does the man sow in Jesus' parable (v. 24)? What happened to the field (v. 25)?
2. What did the owner's servants notice (v. 26)? What do they ask the owner (v. 27-28)?
3. Why doesn't the owner want them to pull out the weeds (v. 29)? What is his plan (v. 30)?
4. What 2 things does Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven to next (v. 31-33)? What is the size of each thing at the beginning? How does this contrast with how it ends up?
5. How did Jesus speak to the crowds (v. 34)? Why was he doing this (v. 35)?
6. What does each part of the parable of the weeds represent (v. 37-38)? What happens to the weeds, which are those who do evil (v. 40-42)? What happens to the righteous (v. 43)?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. Why is Jesus telling this parable? What does the parable of the weeds mean? Why wouldn't the farmer remove the weeds immediately? Why are the weeds thrown in the fire (v. 41)?
2. What does this parable teach us about good and evil? How does the parable help us understand Jesus and his role in the world?
3. What does the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the yeast teach us about the kingdom of heaven? How might this contrast what the Jewish people expected?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. How does this passage help you navigate the evil you see in this world? How do these stories help you see your need for Jesus? In summary, how is your understanding of God and the enemy shaped by this passage?
2. How do these parables help you understand what God is doing in the world? How do they help you understand your role in building God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven? How are you doing this at SRU? In what ways do you want to grow?
3. Do you find yourself judging who is 'a weed' or 'wheat'? How does the parable of the weeds help you think through your life as a Christian and your interactions with others?
4. Are there any other ways in which you are challenged by these parables?