

PARABLE OF WHEAT AND WEEDS: THE QUESTION OF EVIL

MATHEW 13:24–30

Introduction

Some of man's basic questions about the presence of evil in the world and judging others are covered in this parable. It is a parable that has some very practical answers and lessons for man.

1. There are both good and evil people in this world and in the Kingdom of Heaven (vv. 24-26).
2. Christ sows the righteous: the devil sows the wicked (vv. 24-25).
3. Men question why there is evil in the world and in the kingdom (church). Did God plant the evil as well as the good (vv. 27-28)?
4. Men are not to judge who the wheat and weeds, the good and bad, are. Why? Because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the good and bad, and some of the good might be rooted up (v. 29).
5. A day of harvest and of judgment is coming (vv. 29-30).
6. God alone has the wisdom to judge correctly (vv. 29-30).

Jesus explains the parable in vs. 36-43. Glancing at the major points of the parable will help one get an overview of the parable.

- I. The parable: describes the Kingdom of Heaven (vv. 31-43) (v. 24).
- II. A man (Christ) sows good seed (the righteous) (v. 24).
- III. An enemy (the devil) sows weeds (the wicked) (v. 25).
- IV. A day for fruit comes (v. 26).
- V. A day of questioning comes (vv. 27-30).
- VI. A day of harvest is coming (v. 30).

I. *Mathew 13:24 Kingdom of Heaven*

This parable describes the Kingdom of Heaven (See *Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24).

II. *Mathew 13:24, 37–38 Mission of Jesus Christ*

A man sows good seed. *The man* is Christ, the Son of Man (v. 37); *the good seed* are the righteous (v. 43), *the children* of the kingdom (v. 38). *The field* is the world. Note two things.

1. What the man, Christ, does. His work is to sow righteous people in the world.

Mat 20:28 “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

Psa 126:5 *Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.*

2. The man, Christ, owns the world. The world is “his field.”

John 1:3 *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

Col 1:16 *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities: all things were created by him and for him.*

Heb 1:2 *But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

Thought 1. Note several lessons.

- 1) Christ owns the field. The world is His by right because He created it (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).
- 2) Christ does sow in the world. He works actively. He is not far off out in outer space someplace, disinterested and inactive. He is vitally interested in the world, and He works hard at sowing the righteous.
- 3) Seed is scattered all over the field. God has scattered the seed, the righteous all over the world. No single nation possesses all the righteous of the earth. No single nation is a favourite of God. God does not discriminate between people. He is not partial.
- 4) Seed is to bear fruit. If it does not, it is either *dead* or else it is not real seed.
- 5) There is no righteous person apart from Him. He is *the sower* of the righteous seed.

III. **Mathew 13:25, 38–39** *The Enemy, Satan*

Satan, an enemy, sows weeds. *The enemy* is the devil (*diabolos*. v. 39), the liar, the deceiver, the one who struggles against the truth. *The weeds* are the children of the devil or the wicked one (v. 38).

1. Note what the enemy (the devil) does. His work is to sow wicked or lawless people in the world and to do it secretly so that they will be unnoticed (vv. 38, 41). He came while men slept (v. 25).

They were...

- unconscious • too busy • too unconcerned
- unaware • too preoccupied
- too enticed with pleasure and other affairs

The devil operated under the cover of darkness and deception.

John 8:43-45 *“Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!”*

John 13:2 *The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.*

Acts 5:3 *Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”*

Acts 13:10 *“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?”*

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’*

2 Cor 4:3-4 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Eph 2:2 *In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

1 John 3:10 *This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

2. Note that the enemy (the devil) sows in the same field as the Lord. The bad are sown among the good. The devil’s method is counterfeit and imitation (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Some within the world and within the church have not been sown by the Lord. They may be in the world and in the church; they may even look like they belong to Him, but they do not.

2 Cor 11:13-15 *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

Thought 1. The devil is a sworn enemy to Christ, to the world, and to all good. He is the sworn enemy of man, to his peace, and to the fulfilling of his purpose and life on earth. Whatever power he uses on earth is the same as the power used by wicked men: it is usurped and unjust (See *Satan*, Rev. 12:9).

Thought 2. One reason so many weeds are sown is because so many righteous are sleeping when they should be watching over the field (v. 25). Satan never sleeps; he is ever awake for every opportunity.

1 Pet 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Thought 3. Note the words, “And went away.” Satan does not want to be known as the sower of wicked men. In fact, he wants the wicked to disclaim him, never to confess that he is their “father” (Jn. 8:44). The weeds are “in the Lord’s field” professing that they belong to God, but they are deceived (2 Cor. 11:13-14).

Titus 1:16 *They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

IV. Mathew 13:26 Only Profession is False Profession

A day for bearing fruit always comes. It comes for every professing Christian. The weeds themselves were called “darnel,” some form of plant or wild corn that was slightly poisonous and narcotic. When eaten it would cause dizziness and nausea. It was called the bastard wheat. Its roots became intertwined with the roots of the wheat. If it were rooted up, it would destroy the wheat plant before the fruit became mature. The method used to get rid of it was to let it grow and then to harvest it with the wheat. It was then separated from the wheat, bundled together, and cast into a flaming fire.

Note something: the weeds (that is, the unregenerate) looked like wheat when sown and during the growing stage. All men appear the same in religious practices. It is during the fruit-bearing stage that the difference appears. Unregenerate men can imitate true believers for only so long; eventually their true nature begins to show.

Mat 7:17 *“Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”*

Gal 5:19-23 *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

Titus 1:15 *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.*

1 John 3:10 *This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

Thought 1. A person’s nature always comes out eventually. A weed shows itself. A wicked person may profess to be righteous, but a life of selfishness and

unrighteousness will eventually take hold. The profession may continue, but so will the life of wickedness.

Thought 2. A fact to note: the weeds (wicked) among the wheat (righteous) are hurtful to the wheat.

- 1) They are an evil reflection upon the wheat. They sometimes make it very difficult for the world to distinguish between *good* and evil; therefore they are the primary cause for the charge of hypocrisy levelled against the church.
- 2) They stymie the growth of the wheat. Their behaviour and conversation and thoughts are centred in the world, not on Christ. Therefore the righteous are not edified when weeds are clinging to them.
- 3) They are a threat to the wheat. They can draw needed nourishment from the wheat. The professing weed can tempt and lead the righteous away from the Lord and His nourishment, tempt and lead the righteous into the world and its delights.
- 4) They can cause the death of the wheat. The professing weed can persecute and even kill the wheat.

V. *Mathew 13:27–30 A Day of Questioning*

A day of questioning comes. There is the question concerning weeds or evil in the world.

=> Where does evil come from?

=> If there is a God, why is evil allowed to continue?

At this particular stage of the disciples' growth, Jesus simply states that evil persons are present — that someone who is an enemy to God plants them. His statement without an explanation is enough, at least for the present time. However, in answering the question of evil, a person needs to consider the full revelation of God that is given in Scripture. Scripture reveals that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, is the original Sower or Creator. He is the Master and Owner of the field or world. He created man to be perfect (v.43), that is, in His own image; and He planted within man a spirit to do right (Gen 1:26). But immediately after creation, the other sower, the devil, went right to work. He began with Adam and Eve (Ge.3:1f); and ever since, he has sown nothing but weeds, the unrighteous, among God's "good seed."

There is the question as to why evil is allowed to continue in the world and why hypocrites are allowed to continue in the church instead of being disciplined and expelled. This question, of course, concerns judging others. Jesus' answer to this question needs close attention. A person on this earth is not to judge others (Note Mt. 13:30).

1. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between the wheat and the weeds, the righteous and the hypocrites who profess to be righteous but are not. But note: if a person judges, he may tear out some wheat along with the weeds.

2. A day of judgment is coming; however, it is not to be executed by men, but by Christ at His return.

Thought 1. Evil is of great concern to the righteous. We must always be before the Lord dealing with the presence of evil and our responsibility toward it.

Thought 2. Note who is to blame for wicked people in God's kingdom and church. It is not God's servant but the devil who is responsible. God's servant is not at fault for hypocrites in the church; he is not to be blamed for hypocrites.

Thought 3. Great caution and patience must always be shown in dealing with the sins of men.

Mark 2:17 *On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Luke 19:10 *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

2 Pet 3:9 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

MATHEW 13:29–30 JUDGING OTHERS

There are three very practical reasons why no man can judge another.

1. A person is to be judged for his whole life. He is not to be judged for a single act or for a particular period of his life. No one sees another person's whole life. In fact, very little of a person's life (thought or activity) is seen by any one individual.
2. A person may make a serious mistake or go through a stage of terrible sin. Then, by the eternal mercy and eternal grace of God, he may turn back to Christ and make the rest of his life a wonderful service for God.
3. Any person who is judged to be righteous today may fall into sin later, years later. Only God can see the whole of a life. Only God can see and know all the facts that led the person to sin: facts within his being and facts without; pressures within and pressures without; relationships within and relationships without. Only God can know a person completely and fully accurately know all the ramifications of every thought and act and stage of life.

Mat 7:1 *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged."*

Rom 2:1 *You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*

Rom 14:4, 13 *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.*

1 Cor 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

James 4:12 *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you — who are you to judge your neighbour? □*

VI. **Mathew 13:30 Judgment**

A day of harvest is coming. The ones to be judged and condemned are in the kingdom; they include all those who offend others and who do injury (are lawless). (See *Hell-fire*, Mt. 5:22 and *Hell, Torment*, Lk. 16:24; *Judgement*, Mathew 8:12; and *Reward*, Mt. 13:43).

MATHEW 05:22 HELL FIRE OR GEHENNA (GEENNA)

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” Mathew 05:22

The word is used eleven or twelve times in the New Testament, and in every case it is spoken by Jesus except in the Epistle of James. It illustrates the terrible truth of the second death, of man's final separation from God. Jesus pointed to the burning, repulsive rubbish dump outside the city limits of Jerusalem and said that it was exactly what hell was like. The dump was called Gehenna. It was in the Valley of Hinnom which served as a public incinerator. Hanging over it was a layer of thick, smouldering smoke arising from what seemed to be an eternal flame. The smell and filth became a breeding cesspool for a loathsome worm that was difficult to kill (Mk. 9:44). Thus, Jesus found in Gehenna a description of just what it means to be separated from God eternally and to die the second death. Several facts are said about hell or Gehenna:

- It is the same as the lake of fire, a place of torture (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14-15).
- It has to do with the second death (Rev. 21:8; Jn. 8:24).
- It is Hell (Mt. 5:29-30; 10:28; 23:15, 33; Lk. 12:5).
- It is eternal fire (Mt. 18:8).
- It is the fire of Hell (Mt. 18:9; Jas. 3:6).
- It is unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43-49).

The teaching of Jesus should always be remembered. Remembrance is critical in determining a person's fate. Hell is a definite place, a real place that is specifically located. It was originally prepared for the devil and his angels. But all men who choose to follow self and evil and to reject God shall also be sent to hell eternally.

Mat 3:10 *"The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."*

Mat 5:29-30 *"If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."*

Mat 7:19 *"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."*

Mat 10:28 *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."*

Mat 11:23 *"And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day."*

Mat 13:42, 50 *"They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth... And throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Mat 16:18 *"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."*

Mat 18:8-9 *"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."*

Mat 23:15 *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites: You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."*

Mat 23:33 *"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"*

Mat 25:41 *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*

Mark 9:43-48 *“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”*

Luke 3:9 *“The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

Luke 10:15 *“And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.”*

Luke 12:5 *“But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”*

Luke 16:23-24 *“In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’” □*

LUKE 16:24 HELL - TORMENT

To be anguished, tortured, and greatly distressed; to suffer pain and sorrow. The Bible unquestionably teaches there is to be a torment for unbelievers in fire. However, it must be remembered that the fire we know is material and temporal; it is not spiritual or eternal. Earthly fire does not last forever. Nothing on earth does. Earthly fire is of the physical dimension of being. The fire of hell, whatever its nature and qualities, is spiritual and eternal. It never ends. And men must face this; they must not shrink from the truth of hell. Why? Because hell, that is, separation from God, is much worse than any experience here on earth. It will be much worse than any physical experience imaginable. This is the teaching of Scripture. This is the point Jesus was making. Man absolutely must flee from hell. Man absolutely must flee to Christ for salvation. (See Mt. 5:22, 29; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; 25:41; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 12:5; 16:23; 2 Th. 1:8-9; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 14:10-11; 16:10; 18:10; 19:20; 20:10-15; 21:8.) □

MATHEW 08:12 JUDGMENT

*“But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” **Mathew 08:12***

Jesus' great power shall reject the unbelieving. The judgment of unbelievers is to be. Note: Jesus predicted that the Jews who persist in unbelief shall perish. They are rejected by God, despite the fact they had been chosen to be the children of God and had been given so many privileges (see Jn. 4:22; Rom. 9:1-33; 10:1-21).

1. There will be *darkness*: a region, a place, a habitation, a home of pitch black that forbids any sight whatsoever. A place without light, without gleam or hope of any light whatsoever. It is a place of utter darkness in which one lives completely incapacitated, helpless, and hopeless. It is far away from the splendour and glory and brightness of God's presence. It is being cast into the gloom and blackness of the outer world. It is misery, the misery of a lost soul.

Mat 8:12 *"But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Mat 22:13 *"Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"*

2 Pet 2:17 *These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.*

Jude 1:6 *And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home — these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.*

Job 18:5 *"The lamp of the wicked is snuffed out; the flame of his fire stops burning."*

Prov 20:20 *If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.*

2. There will be *weeping*: grief, loud grief, mourning, groaning, wailing, floods and floods of tears.
3. There will be *gnashing of teeth* (brugmos): grinding; biting in hostility and bitterness and indignation; spitefully snapping the teeth. It is rage, fury, and despair because nothing can be done. A person's state is permanently determined.

Mat 8:12 *"But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Mat 13:42 *"They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Mat 24:51 *"He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Mat 25:30 *"And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Psa 112:10 *The wicked man will see and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and waste away; the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.*

Thought 1. Entrance into heaven is based upon one thing and one thing only: faith in Christ. Heritage, godly parents and children, religious profession, baptism, and church membership — all are useless without faith. Without faith, man has only the judgment of God to look forward to. □

MATHEW 13:43 REWARD

“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” Mathew 13:43

The righteous shall be glorified. The promise is given to the righteous, the promise that they shall “shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” What does this mean? Several things need to be said.

1. Just what a *glorified* man will look like is not known.

1 John 3:2 *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

2. It will involve a *glorious* body.

Phil 3:21 *Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (see Rom 8:17)*

1 Cor 15:41-44, 48-50, 53 *The sun has one kind of splendour, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendour. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.*

3. It will involve *shining like the sun*, a reflection of the glory of God (See Glory of God, Rom. 3:23.) □

ROMANS 03:23 THE GLORY OF GOD

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. **Romans 03:23***

The “glory of God” is God’s standard for man. It means His *moral glory*. It means His excellence, splendour, brilliance, brightness, magnificence, pre-eminence, dignity, majesty, and grace. It means the absolute perfection of God, the perfection of His person. It is this “glory of God” which demands that man correspond perfectly with God — if man wishes to be at peace with God and to live in His presence.

1. Glory is *light*, perfect light. It is the very highest degree of light: the perfection of splendour, brightness, brilliance, resplendence. This is seen in many passages.

=> John saw how bright the glory of God is when he had the vision of the new Jerusalem. (The new Jerusalem will be the centre or capital of world government in the new heavens and earth.)

Rev 21:10-11 *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*

Rev 21:23 *The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.*

=> Jesus experienced the light of God’s glory.

Mat 17:2 *There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.*

=> Paul experienced the light of God’s glory.

Acts 22:6 *“About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.”* (see Acts 22:11; 9:3-9)

=> Moses experienced the light of God’s glory.

Exo 34:29-30 *When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. (see 29-35)*

2. Glory is purity, perfect purity. It is the very highest degree of virtue and goodness, of quality and morality. It is the highest excellence of character and the perfection of being.

1 John 1:5 *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*

Mat 19:17 *“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.”*

Mat 5:48 *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Rev 15:4 *“Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”*

3. Glory is majesty, perfect majesty. It is the very highest degree of pre-eminence and magnificence, of dignity and honour, of meriting worship and praise.

Isa 6:1, 3 *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

Isa 57:15 *For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*

Psa 93:1 *The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. (see Psa 97:1)*

4. Glory is being, perfect being. It is the very highest degree of worth, quality and merit, preciousness and value. (Jn. 17:2-3.)

Rev 4:11 *“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”*

Isa 43:10 *“You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”*

Mat 19:17 *“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” □*

MATHEW 19:23–24 THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Mathew 19:23-24

The Kingdom of Heaven evidently means the same thing as the Kingdom of God, eternal life and salvation. The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God are interchanged when Jesus says, “it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 19:23) or “Kingdom of God” (Mt. 19:24). Eternal life (Mt. 19:26) and salvation (Mt. 19:25) belong to the very same concept. Eternity and salvation, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, is the very subject being discussed in Mt. 19:16-30. Having eternal life, being saved or entering into the Kingdom of God or of Heaven is more difficult for a rich man than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

The Kingdom of Heaven and of God is revealed in four different stages throughout history.

1. There is the spiritual kingdom that is at hand; it is present right now (Mt. 4:17; 12:28).
- a. The present kingdom refers to *God’s rule and reign and authority in the lives of believers.*

Eph 1:18-23 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Phil 2:5-11 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the*

name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Col 1:13 *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.*

- b. The present kingdom is offered to the world and to men in the person of Jesus Christ.
- c. The present kingdom must be received as a little child.

Mark 10:14,15 *When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*

- d. The present kingdom is experienced only by the new birth.

John 3:3 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

- e. The present kingdom is entered now and must be received now.

Mat 21:31 *"Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you."*

Mark 10:15 *"I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*

- f. The present kingdom is a spiritual, life-changing blessing.

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

- g. The present kingdom is to be the first thing sought by believers.

Mat 6:33 *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

- 2. There is the professing kingdom that is also in this present age. It refers to the people who profess Christianity in every generation. It pictures the imperfect state of the Kingdom of Heaven or professing Christianity, what professing Christianity is like between Christ's first coming and His return. This imperfect state is what is called "the secrets of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 13:1-52, esp. 11)

Mat 13:24-25 *Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away."*

3. There is the millennial kingdom that is future. It is the actual rule of Christ or the government of Christ that is to come to this earth for a thousand years.

- a. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom predicted by Daniel.

Dan 2:44 *“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”*

Dan 7:18, 22, 27 *But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever - yes, for ever and ever, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.*

- b. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom promised to David.

2 Sam 7:12, 16 *“When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”*

Psa 89:3-4 *You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ‘I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.’”*

Zec 12:8 *On that day the Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the Lord going before them.*

- c. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom pictured by John.

Rev 20: 4-6 *I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

4. There is the perfect kingdom of the new heaven and earth that is future.

- a. The eternal kingdom is the rule and reign of God in a perfect universe for all eternity.

John 14:1-3 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

1 Cor 15:24 *Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.*

2 Pet 3:10-13 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

- b. The eternal kingdom is the perfect state of being for the believer in the future.

1 Cor 15:50 *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

Rev 21:4-5 *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*

- c. The eternal kingdom is an actual place into which believers are to enter sometime in the future.

Mat 8:11 *I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*

- d. The eternal kingdom is a gift of God that will be given in the future.

Luke 12:32 *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” □*

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED: THE GROWTH AND GREATNESS OF CHRISTIANITY MATHEW 13:31–32

Introduction

Christ is describing the growth and greatness of His kingdom and of Christianity in this parable. He shows how it begins as the smallest of seeds and grows into the greatest of movements.

The message of the parable is a powerful message to individual believers and congregations as well as to Christianity as a whole. The seed of faith begins ever so small, but it grows into the greatest of bushes as it nourishes itself day by day. Mature (grown, v. 32) believers and congregations alike provide lodging for the people of a turbulent world.

- I. The parable: describes the Kingdom of Heaven (Christianity) (v. 31).
- II. A mustard seed was planted (v. 31).
- III. The mustard seed grew and became the greatest of bushes (v. 32).

MATHEW 13:31–32 THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

There are two interpretations of this parable.

1. Some say the birds are those in the world who find their lodging in the kingdom — the kingdom (the church and Christianity) that had so small a beginning but is now growing into a stately movement. Many in the world, believers and non-believers alike, have found help and safety under its branches. Laws and institutions of mercy, justice, and honour have to a large extent evolved from this magnificent movement. This interpretation relies heavily upon the picture painted by the Old Testament. A great empire is said to be like a tree and conquered nations are said to be like birds who lodge under its shadow (Eze. 17:22-24; 31:16; Dan. 4:14).
2. Others say the birds are the children of the evil one who see the lodging facilities and protective covering of the kingdom and seek lodging therein.

Neither interpretation need exhaust the meaning. However, two facts should be noted.

1. Jesus was speaking to great crowds in the first four parables. His purpose was to teach what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. It is a *mixture of good and evil*. He had just been vindicating His Messiahship to the Pharisees (Mt. 12:150) who were set upon destroying Him (Mt. 12:14). It was the same day that He began to

speaking in parables, and His purpose was to hide the secrets from unbelievers and to protect Himself from those who would destroy Him (Mt. 13:10-17). They were the evil ones who had penetrated the kingdom. However, this fact needs to be known only by true disciples, not necessarily by those who are evil. Therefore, some say that the very purpose for speaking in parables seems to point to the interpretation of a mixture of good and evil.

2. The birds are used to describe the evil one in the Parable of the Seed (vv. 4, 19). □

I. *Mathew 13:31 The Kingdom of God*

The parable describes the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, the kingdom's present state here on earth (*See Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24).

II. *Mathew 13:31 Jesus Christ Planted the Mustard Seed*

Christianity: a mustard seed was planted. The mustard seed was used in proverbial sayings to describe smallness in the day of Jesus. The mustard seed grew to be a great bush, a bush as large as a tree. Its characteristics were loftiness, expansion and prominence. (*See Mustard Seed*, Mk. 4:31)

The Man is Jesus Christ. The field is the world (cp. vv. 24, 37-38). Jesus Christ plants the seed in His field which is the world. Note the world is His (see vv. 13:24, 37-38).

Took (labon) indicates to take deliberately; to take with purpose and thought. The planting of the seed was not by chance. It did not just happen. Christ *deliberately* planted the seed and nourished the growth of the bush. The bush existed because of *great purpose and thought*.

The *field* means the world. As said, Christ plants the seed in His field. The world is His.

Thought 1. The Man is active, very active, not lazy or lethargic. He plans and He sows. This is a great lesson as we plant the mustard seed of our lives. What an enormous difference there would be in the world if we would plant our lives where many could come and find the care they so desperately need!

III. *Mathew 13:32 Christianity*

The mustard seed grew and became the greatest of bushes. Note three things.

1. The beginning of the bush (Christianity). It began as the smallest of seeds. There are several facts that show just how small the beginning of the kingdom or Christianity really was.
 - a. Christianity began in the soul of a single person. Christ launched the movement all by Himself. The idea and dream were in His soul and no one else's. He moved out alone — in God's strength.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

- b. Christianity was born in the soul of a carpenter from the obscure villages of Nazareth and Capernaum (Galilee) and from an obscure and despised nation, Israel (See Mt. 8:5-13; 13:53-58).

John 1:45-46 *Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.*

John 7:52 *They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”*

Mark 6:3 *“Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.*

- c. Christianity was carried forth by men without position and without prestige. They were not mighty or noble or famous. They were only common folk, some from ordinary professions such as fishermen (Mt. 4:18-21) and some from despised professions such as tax collecting (Mt. 9:9).

1 Cor 1:26-29 *Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*

- d. Christianity grew from just a few persons who had very “little faith” (Mt. 14:31; Lk. 12:32).

Mat 6:30 *“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”*

Mat 8:24-26 *Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.*

Mat 16:8 *Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?” (see 16:6-12)*

- e. Christianity numbered only about one hundred and twenty persons when Christ departed this earth.

Acts 1:15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty).

- 2. The bush (Christianity) grew into the greatest of bushes. Christ said explicitly that when the kingdom or Christianity is fully grown, it is the greatest of movements.
 - a. Christianity is the greatest movement socially. It has changed the face of the earth. Liberty and freedom, and the laws and institutions of mercy, justice and honour have for the most part evolved from Christianity. The movement has set free the enslaved and raised enormously the status of women and children (See Mk. 10:5; Acts 16:14).
 - b. Christianity is the greatest movement individually and personally. This is true because Christ did for an individual just what a tree does for a bird.
 - 1) Christ gives rest to a person just as a tree provides rest for a bird (See Mt. 11:28-30; Heb. 4:T-13).
 - 2) Christ gives a home to a person just as a tree provides a home for a bird (See Mt. 12:48-50).
 - 3) Christ gives food, physically and spiritually, to a person just as a tree provides food for a bird (See Mt. 6:25-34).

Thought 1. This parable is a great encouragement to every believer.

- 1) It is an encouragement to us in our personal lives and in our ministry. No matter how small we may begin, we must continue on. If we continue, our lives and efforts will grow. We may be like Christ and see little growth in numbers while here on earth, but the growth will take place. Success is assured.

John 4:35-36 “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.”

Gal 6:8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Psa 126:5-6 Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

- 2) It is an encouragement to our hope in eternity. The Kingdom will finally come some day, and we shall be rewarded for our faithful labour (See *Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24).

Mat 10:42 “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

Mat 25:23 *His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

Mat 25:34-36 *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'"*

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

3. The result of the bush's presence. The birds come and lodge in its branches. The same two steps are essential for man.
 - a. First, a person must come.

Mat 11:28 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Isa 1:18 *"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

Isa 55:1 *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."*

- b. Second, a person must lodge and live and walk in Christ (See Mt. 13:1-9).

John 15:4-6 *"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."*

Rom 6:4 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Eph 4:1 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

Col 2:6 *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.*

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

1 John 2:6 *Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*

2 John 1:9 *Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ■*

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN OR YEAST: THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL MATHEW 13:33

Introduction: Leaven, Yeast

There are essentially two interpretations of this parable.

1. Some say the leaven represents evil that penetrates the Kingdom of God and His church. The main arguments of this position are threefold.
 - a. Consistency with the Lord's purpose points to this interpretation (See *Parable of the Mustard Seed*, Mt. 13:31-32).
 - b. The Lord's very choice of *yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour* indicates a mixture of evil within the good. Yeast is always used to symbolize evil in Scripture (Mt. 16:6, 11; See Mk. 8:15). Yeast sours, ferments and putrefies. It is a picture of corruption which penetrates and permeates the dough (see 1 Cor. 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:7-9).
 - c. The woman had to hide the yeast, camouflage it in the flour.
2. Most say the yeast symbolizes the Kingdom of God that penetrates and works silently to transform men and society.
 - a. It is argued that Christ and His gospel alone have *the power* to transform lives, individually and socially. It is felt that evil could never be said to "work all through" God's kingdom, for such would mean the failure of the kingdom.
 - b. It is also argued that the woman took the yeast and acted with purpose and plan. The argument is that no person can be said to deliberately act against God's kingdom until God's kingdom collapses (until the yeast has "*worked all through the dough*"). If evil works and works until it has "worked all through the dough," then evil will succeed in corrupting God's kingdom. Again such an interpretation would mean that God's kingdom is to fail.
- I. The parable describes the Kingdom of Heaven (v. 33).
- II. Leaven (the gospel) is deliberately taken (v. 33).
- III. Leaven is mixed in unfinished flour (v. 33).
- IV. Leaven silently transforms the whole lump (v. 33).

I. *Mathew 13:33 The Kingdom of Heaven*

The parable describes the Kingdom of Heaven (See *Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24).

II. *Mathew 13:33 The Church*

The yeast or leaven is deliberately taken. In the first interpretation where yeast represents evil, the woman would probably represent the religion of man or what might be called a rationalistic or humanistic religion. Man has always had a religion of some sort, a religion of his own making. He attempts to satisfy the spiritual need of his soul, and just being associated with Christianity and being within the walls of the church make him feel better.

In the second interpretation where yeast represents the Kingdom of God, the woman would probably be the church and the yeast the gospel. The flour would be the world or those without the knowledge of God in the world. This means that the church would have a twofold task.

1. The church would seek to change or transform *individuals*: to penetrate an individual with the gospel until the whole person is transformed.

John 1:12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Rom 10:13 *For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

2. The church would seek to leaven *society* as a whole: to penetrate society with the gospel until the whole of society was transformed.

Mat 28:19-20 *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Mark 16:15 *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."*

Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Thought 1. See note Mt. 13:31 for a contrast between being diligent and being lazy.

Thought 2. It was the woman's task to add yeast and make the bread as it should be. Note: (1) she did her job, and (2) it took yeast (the gospel) to do the job right.

III. *Mathew 13:33 Yeast, Leaven — The Gospel*

The yeast is mixed in unfinished flour. If the yeast is the gospel, then the picture is that of the gospel being placed...

- into the unfinished and imperfect world.
- into the unfinished and imperfect church in its earthly state.

The gospel (yeast) has to be placed right in the midst of the world and the church (unfinished and imperfect) if it is to do its work.

Note another point: flour is not bread, not by itself. By itself it is hard, dry, unsatisfying and not too nourishing. Using flour by itself to make bread is to misuse flour. Yet, how many try to make it through life without the yeast of the gospel. Their flour, that is, their lives, are thereby misused and incomplete.

Thought 1. The gospel is powerful, extremely powerful. Just a “little yeast works through the whole batch of dough” (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). Note three things.

- 1) A person who will allow just a little of the gospel to penetrate his life will eventually have his life changed.

Acts 17:11-12 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

- 2) Believers are to mix the gospel in the world. Just a little yeast will transform much. But observe: the yeast has to be worked and worked in order to be mixed thoroughly. What a lesson for faithfulness in sounding forth the message of the gospel!

Mat 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

2 Tim 2:24-25 And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.

Titus 2:15 These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

- 3) It does not take much yeast to do the work. No matter how little of the gospel a person knows, he should be working to reach people and to change the world for Christ. There is no excuse for doing nothing.

John 15:27 “And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”

Mark 5:19 *Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”*

Acts 4:20 *“For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”*

2 Cor 4:13 *It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak.*

1 Pet 3:15 *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

If a person interprets the yeast to be evil, then the picture is that of the church in its unfinished and imperfect state. Because it is unfinished and not yet perfected, it is permeated with evil. The evil and unbelieving men (yeast) enter the church; they falsely profess to follow Christ.

IV. Mathew 13:33 Gospel — The Yeast that Transforms

Yeast silently transforms the whole lump. Yeast changes and transforms bread. Again, bread made from water is hard, dry and not too nourishing. But yeast mixed in with dough changes and transforms bread tremendously. It does at least four things for bread.

1. Yeast makes bread soft, no longer hard. The yeast of the gospel does the same. It penetrates the heart of a man and softens the hardness of his life. He becomes much softer toward the Lord and toward the needs of others. He becomes a more caring and giving person. Softness is definitely one of the trademarks of a transformed person.
2. Yeast makes bread porous and moist, no longer dry. The yeast of the gospel does the same. It penetrates the dryness of a man's heart and life. The gospel penetrates and creates pores in his life and moistens his heart so that he can grow into a moist or fruitful person.
3. Yeast makes bread satisfying, no longer fulfilling. Again the yeast of the gospel does the same for the man who lives a dissatisfied life with no purpose, meaning, or significance. The gospel transforms a person's heart giving purpose and joy and hope — all the satisfaction a person could ever desire.
4. Yeast makes bread nourishing, no longer of little benefit. The yeast of the gospel does the same thing for the man who seems to accomplish so little in life. The gospel not only gives purpose, but it inspires and causes a person to feed others. A person transformed by the gospel is able to feed the truth to the world — the truth about the emptiness and loneliness of the human heart and God's provision for man's plight.

Note several important facts about how yeast works.

1. Yeast works quietly and silently. It works without fanfare and the spectacular. There is a thoughtful lesson here on how the gospel should be presented (See Mt. 4:5-7; 12:38-40).

2. Yeast finishes its work. Once it is inserted into the dough, nothing can stop it or ever pluck it out. It is in the dough forever and it will transform the dough forever. There is a great lesson here on the security of the person who genuinely allows the gospel to penetrate his heart and life.

John 10:28 *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”*

Phil 1:6 *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

2 Tim 1:12 *That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

1 Pet 1:5 *Who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Jude 1:24-25 *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forever-more! Amen.*

3. Yeast works slowly and gradually, yet consistently. It takes time for it to work through the whole batch of dough. The believer can learn at least two lessons from this fact.
 - a. It will take time for him to grow in the gospel. Just as a child grows physically, if the believer receives proper nourishment, his spiritual growth will take time, but it will be consistent and sure.

Acts 20:32 *“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

2 Tim 3:15-16 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

1 Pet 2:2-3 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

- b. It will take time for his own witnessing and work to produce bread. Yet his service and ministry will work through the lump of flour, the people with whom he works.

Mat 5:16 *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

Titus 2:7 *In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness.*

1 Pet 2:12 *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

4. Yeast changes the quality, not the substance of the dough. It is still dough, yet it is changed. A man who receives the gospel remains a man, but he is a changed man — a man of quality, a man of God.

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Thought 1. The gospel, God's Word of hope, is quick and powerful. It is sharp; therefore, it will penetrate and transform lives.

Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ■*