

WELCOME

Our Mission is to . . .

- Connect you to Jesus
- Connect you to His community for discipleship
- Connect you to your mission and purpose in life

We are not here to tell you what to wear, eat, listen to, vote for, or even believe. These are things you must determine for yourself if you want to have real faith.

Life is too short to be shallow. In fact, you can't really do life without developing a strong foundation and becoming a person of substance.

FHNew - Our mission as a church is to do everything we can to help you grow your faith. If you would like to get to know us a little better, or begin or continue your journey of faith, text **FHNew** to **53123** and we will send you a link to a few short videos about Foothills Church, or stop by the Connection booth.

FHBaptism - One important step in your faith journey is being baptized. If you would like information on Believers Baptism, text **FHBaptism** to **53123** and we will send you the teaching on Believers' Baptism.

Introduction

The parables are one of the most significant ways in which we understand the Kingdom of God. The vast majority of parables begin with *"The kingdom of God is like . . ."*

The **Parable of the Weeds** is a great beginning point for two reasons:

1. It is one of the parables where Jesus gives His disciples a separate explanation. When Jesus gives an explanation, it shows us how He viewed the principle of "correlation:" which elements of the story have a one-to-one correlation and which elements do not.
2. It is a parable about the over-all existence of the Kingdom of God. It gives a perspective in which to understand all of the other parables.

The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30 [NIV])

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. When the wheat sprouted and formed

heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

The Explanation of Jesus to His disciples (Matthew 13:36-43):

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Historical perspective

1. Matthew wrote his gospel directly to the Jewish people in order to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament.
2. The Jewish people believed that the Kingdom of God was a physical place located in the Promised Land of Canaan. Only by removing the Roman occupiers would they receive the blessing of the covenant with God.

Implications for your life

1. **Because these two kingdoms coexist side-by-side, set an expectation that your life will not be free of injustice, violence or suffering and will be touched by evil**
 - There will be tragedies in your life, suffering and injustice
 - We are not supposed to be happy about it, ignore it, deny it, but be prepared for it: like sailors who batten down the hatches in an oncoming storm, you should have a plan to batten down the hatches, and let things happen
 - Our first reaction when anything bad happens is to blame God: Why would he let this happen? I thought he loved me!

- In the midst of difficult times, all we see are the weeds. We think to ourselves: God, I am your child, I am a wonderful, productive, pure stock of wheat! You need to get these weeds out of my life so that I can grow into the wonderful thing I expect myself to be. And yet God's perspective is, "If I pull all the weeds out it doesn't strengthen your faith, it weakens it"

2. **Strengthen your faith in the good times because it determines how you go through the bad times**

- Story: we have some dear friends whose young child was diagnosed with a horrible cancer. Prognosis didn't look good. The treatment protocol severe. The whole situation heartbreaking. During this incredible suffering in their life, I made a comment about how the vast majority of couples, when faced with such a tragedy, end up separating. They said, we determined beforehand that this will not happen to us, and it didn't
- This is why training in righteousness is important. Training sets your expectation. People who train for marathons must train for hitting the wall. It is the period of time in the race when the body has exhausted all resources. Then it switches over. One of the most interesting things about hitting the wall is if you go through it, you often experience the runners' high -- a euphoric sense of lightness when nothing hurts and it is pure joy to run
- Training in righteousness sharpens your spiritual reflexes. During World War II, the first troops that were trained and deployed in Theatre presented an issue. Over 20% did not actually fire their weapon during battle. In their training, they used targets, sandbags, etc. It is a totally different thing to put another person in your site and pull the trigger
- The writer of Hebrews says, "*But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to distinguish between good and evil.*" (Heb 5:14 NASB)

3. **I think this parable has huge implications for raising your children**

- Is your goal to keep your children free from all evil? I am a strong advocate for the innocence of children, allowing them to be innocent. But it is also important to note that evil is within the human heart as well.
- **At some level, do not insulate your kids so much that they don't know how to overcome the evil outside and miss the ability to deal with it on the inside.**

Discussion Questions

1. How does knowing and understanding the nature of evil help you become a better person?
2. If bad things happen in your life, how does knowing God's plan to avoid uprooting the faith of people help you deal with it?
3. What can you do right now to strengthen your faith so you are better prepared when difficult things hit?