

Good morning everyone.

This morning, is the 4th Sunday of the month, and usually on the 4th Sunday, I'm planning on doing what I call, a "low maintenance" message.

- ❖ Less time in preparation
- ❖ More time just reading God's word
- ❖ With a little bit of brief explanation as we go...

But once again, it didn't seem to turn out that way. Today, we're up to the parable of the weeds:

Matthew 13:24–52 (ESV)

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' ²⁸ He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers,

Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

We'll come to the explanation of that, a little bit later.

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

³¹ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

You know, an amazing thing is, when Jesus set about building His kingdom, He gathered nobodies – and not many of them. Yeah, sometimes thousands of people came along for a look, but not many stayed. By the time Jesus was crucified, there was just a few women and a couple of men, at the foot of the cross. And after His crucifixion, you could fit all of His followers together, in the one room – that's not many.

Out of the thousands who began to follow Him, nearly everybody fell away. Last week, we studied the parable of the sower, and the lesson from that, was "Not everyone who starts out with Christ, will finish with Christ." Some start to follow, but as soon as the persecution comes, they'll drop

off. Some begin to follow Jesus, but they become more interested in worldly things, and wealth, and they're never fruitful followers.

That's the way it is today, and it's not new – that's the way it was when Jesus was here in person – sometimes thousands would follow, but most of them dropped away.

And so the early church began as this small, insignificant blip on history's screen... But just like a tiny bit of yeast – you can't even see it – in a batch of dough, it changed the whole character of the world. Just like a tiny seed, when planted, it grew. And those few men and women, who were Jesus' disciples, carried the good news of the gospel all over the known world, and the Kingdom of God grew. And today, there are more people who call themselves “Christian” than any other religion on the face of the planet.

And most of the developed world, has been founded on Christian principles and values – it's been written into their constitutions and the laws of their land have their basis in the law of God...

Don't ever think to yourself that the church has come to nothing – that Christians have no effect on the world... The Kingdom of God has a life of its own, and Christ will build His church.

Let's go on:

Prophecy and Parables

³⁴ All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. ³⁵ This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables;
I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

We talked about that last week: We use stories, to try and help people understand... Jesus told stories so **not** everybody would understand, but only those who were truly seeking God.

And that's what happened here again. Jesus told the parable of the weeds, and the disciples didn't get it – probably nobody got it – but the disciples who were truly seeking God, were the ones who asked Him to explain it.

So, let me read the parable of the weeds to you again, and then we'll have the explanation:

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' ²⁸ He said to them, 'An enemy has done

this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

And now the explanation: And to understand it, we have to realise that it is a different parable, with a different purpose to the parable we studied last week. Last week, we had the parable of the sower. This week, is the parable of the weeds – don't confuse them:

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." ³⁷ He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and

throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

The gospel is good news. The good news of the gospel, is Jesus Christ came to save sinners. And as Christians, that's the message we have to share out in the world: Believe in Jesus Christ, repent of your sin, and be forgiven and transformed by God...

But the thing is, for most people today, if you were to say to them, Christ died to save you, they just don't care. Save me from what???? – I'm all good...

If you were in an aircraft, and someone in that plane hurriedly came to you and said, "There's a parachute under your seat. Put it on. It will save you from the consequences of falling from a very large height" ... So what??? ...I don't care... I'm in an aeroplane. It's not good news at all...

But what if that person said to you, "Both engines have just cut out. The aircraft is going to crash. But you still have time to put your parachute on and jump out of the emergency exit..."

*Well, that's very different, isn't it??? It is **very** good news that there is a parachute under my seat. It is **very** good news that I can put that parachute on, jump out the emergency exit, and be saved...*

Until I understand the bad news of my predicament, the good news doesn't seem that good. – it's just irrelevant...

Imagine you're at the Doctor's surgery, and he's telling you about a wonderful new medication. And he's telling you about how wonderful it is, and all the things that it can do... "So what?... Who cares???" ...

But how different would it be if the Doctor had just told you some bad news – "Michael, you've got this horrible disease – you will find it debilitating, as it eats your flesh away, it will be painful, and depressing, and you will die after a few months of suffering and anguish"

But, here is this medication – it will cure you immediately. It's good news...

Until I understand the bad news of my predicament, the good news doesn't seem that good.

And it's exactly the same with the good news of Jesus Christ...

An age-old question, is "why do the wicked prosper"? Why does God allow sin to continue in the world, unpunished?

Well, I'll tell you why – God is slow to anger. God is giving us time, to repent and turn to Him.

Has anyone ever boiled over a saucepan on the stove???
I'm sure you have. The heat can gradually build up, and be

slowly simmering, But there comes a time when the contents begin to boil, and then all of a sudden, when you least expect it, over she goes....

Today, God's anger is slowly simmering, as He holds it back... But there will come a time, and it's called "The day of the Lord", when the anger of God will boil over. And at that time, God will **not** delay His vengeance any longer. He will not tolerate sin any more... And this parable, is a warning, about what side we will be on, when Jesus Christ returns to judge the living and the dead...

So:

**The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.
38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.**

Alright, now don't get confused and think that the field is referring to the church... There is no room (ever) for wickedness in the church. If the devil gets into the church, he **must** to be rooted out.... But some people, read this parable and apply it to the church – "No, we don't need to guard against false teachers or bad theology in the church – God will do that at the end of time"...

This is not about the church – it is about the world. And it explains why, in the world, there is good, and there is evil. There are Christians (Sons of the Kingdom), and there are weeds.

The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.

Now, you have to get this very clear – in Jesus' eyes, there are no shades of grey. Only moments earlier – I think it was the very same day, Jesus said, Matthew 12:30 (ESV)

³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

You're either for Christ, or against Christ... You are either crop or weed – there is no neutral territory.

You are either a son of the Kingdom (a disciple of Jesus Christ), or son of the evil one...

Now, that's pretty confronting.... If you were to tell that to someone down the street, they'd just think you were very judgmental... They'd probably tell you that your idea of Christianity was very exclusive, and nothing like theirs.... Well get this – it is... in the eyes of Jesus Christ, and He's the only one who counts, you are either a disciple of Christ, or a child of the devil...

Most people in our society today, like to view themselves as being on the good side of neutral... There is no neutral. If you are not a Christian – if Jesus Christ is not your lord – if you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ, guess who you belong to??? The devil... That's just the way it is... And I'm sorry if I've offended you, but I'd rather offend you, and help you to understand why the good news is so good, then to make you feel comfortable and unchallenged, and completely oblivious to your predicament....

The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.

⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will

gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

What's the predicament? If you are not a Christian – if you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are a son of the devil, and **all causes of sin and all law-breakers** will be thrown **into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth....**

Hell, is a real place.... And it has to be a real place, because the Lord our God, is a God of justice, and justice requires punishment...

Our justice system in Australia, is no longer a justice system – it has become a correctional system. And that's why we're having all of these arguments in Queensland today, about how to deal with the bikies... The correctional system, has as its basic philosophy, that all people are basically good, and if we correct them in the right way, they will become good and useful members of society...

And so, our so-called justice system, does not seek retribution, but correction. "Our aim is to reform this person so they will not offend again".... Our aim is not to punish them, but to reform them...

But our society does not cry out for correction – it cries out for justice... Those who have been victims of crime, do not

cry out to change these people... Victims of crime cry out for justice. ... And justice means that the perpetrator must be punished...

And it is because our God is a god of justice, that Jesus Christ had to die on the cross...

all causes of sin and all law-breakers will be thrown into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth...

... That's me... I have caused people to sin... I have broken many of God's laws... and God's justice demands that I pay for it with my life... The wages of sin, are death...

But Jesus Christ, the one perfect and sinless man – the only one who has never been a cause of sin – the only one who has never broken any one of God's laws.... – Jesus Christ, carried the cross of crucifixion, and said, "I'll die for Michael..."... I will satisfy your thirst for justice...

And that, is why the good news, is Good news.

- ❖ Agree with God that you are a sinner and a lawbreaker
- ❖ Accept the fact, that without Christ, you are destined for the fiery furnace
- ❖ Repent of your sin
- ❖ Accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your saviour
- ❖ Trust in Him and follow Him
- ❖ And you will be saved

That, is **good** news....

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, **46** who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

When you grasp, how marvellous the good news actually is, there’s nothing to compare it to... If you found a giant, hidden treasure, you’d sell everything you had, to gain that treasure, wouldn’t you? ... if you were a collector of pearls, and you found the most beautiful pearl on the face of the earth, you’d sell everything you had, to gain that one pearl... It is of such great value...

The good news of Jesus Christ, is of such great value...

There is coming a day (the day of the lord), when Christ will return... All sin, all causes of sin, all wickedness, is going to be taken out of the world **Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father**

Our final destiny, is not up in heaven... It’s back here, on Earth... Everything bad, taken away, and everything good poured in...

Oh, how I long for that day... And it’s coming..

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

New and Old Treasures

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Do you understand all these things?

- ❖ Do you understand that Hell is not a fairytale created to scare little children into being good?
- ❖ Do you understand, that if you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are a child of the devil?
- ❖ Do you understand the human predicament? – that the justice of God demands we be punished for our sins?

Now:

- ❖ Do you understand the love of God?
- ❖ Do you understand that Christ died in your place?
- ❖ Do you understand that, by repenting and believing in Christ, and that being His disciple, that you are saved?

Do you understand that??? Well, that makes it worth while, to give up everything, to follow Christ...

Everything you have, just pales into insignificance, in comparison to these things.