THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS: 5 LESSONS

Matthew 13.24-30

24 He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 27 And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ 28 He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Matthew 13.36-43

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached 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 are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children 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 collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, 42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Proverbs 1.8 – “Hear, my child, your father’s instruction, and do not reject your mother’s teaching”

Proverbs 2.1 – “My child, if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you…”

Proverbs 3.1 – “My child, do not forget my teaching…”

Proverbs 4.10 - “Hear, my child, and accept my words…”

Proverbs 29.3 - A child who loves wisdom makes a parent glad.”

Nearly 30 times “my child” instruction in the book of Proverbs.
FIVE LESSONS MY JESUS TAUGHT ME:

LESSON # 1: There is always a hostile power in the world, seeking and waiting to destroy the good seed.
1 PETER 5.8 – “Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.”

Everyday living example – addiction: alcohol, drug, porn, gambling

Proverbs 1.8 – “Hear, my child, your father’s instruction, and do not reject your mother’s teaching”

LESSON #2: It is difficult to distinguish between those in the kingdom and those who are not.
Matthew 25.37-39

“Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'”

Matthew 25.44—45

“Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

Life lesson: “When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.” Or: “To distinguish flowers from weeds, simply pull up everything. What grows back is weeds.”

Wheat/weeds {darnel} look very similar when they first sprout; only later are they more easily identified.

Proverbs 2.1 – “My child, if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you...”

LESSON #3: It is too easy to be quick with our judgments of others.

Matthew 7.1-5

“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.”
"When we see a brother or sister in sin, there are two things we do not know: First, we do not know how hard he or she tried not to sin. And second, we do not know the power of the forces that assailed him or her (LESSON #1). We also do not know what we would have done in the same circumstances.” Do we not criticize someone for same behavior we have shown.

Zig Ziglar invited a friend to go to church with him. The man answered, "Well, I’d like to go. But the church is so full of hypocrites." Ziglar replied, "That’s okay. There’s always room for one more."

Judging one another on issues in the church; wherever you stand on the issues: Baptism request – Theological or pastoral perspective. The BCO (the Rule Book of the Reformed Church in America, states that in order for a child to be baptized, at least of the parents is required to be a confessing member of the congregation. The pastoral perspective is hopeful that the family will become an active part of the worshiping community. The RCA is deeply divided on the subject of homosexuality, specifically regarding the ordination of an opening gay person. As one put it, “One perspective demands purity, while the other perspective calls for unity.

Proverbs 3.1 – “My child, do not forget my teaching…”

LESSON #4: Judgment does come at the end.

Ezekiel 39.21

“I will display my glory among the nations; and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them.”

Back in the day there were seven words that instantly and instinctually brought a child’s anxiety level to DEFCON 5 (1?), whichever is the highest: “Just wait until your father comes home!” Did you notice? The quieter the words were spoken, the more in trouble you were.

There is a constant theme in the Old Testament– God’s mercy in tension with God’s judgment.

Proverbs 4.10 - “Hear, my child, and accept my words…”

LESSON # 5: You are not God!

Romans 12.9

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (quoted from Deuteronomy 32.35)

There are silly examples. I shamelessly take credit for the beautiful days (but not for the yucky ones, of course). There are dangerous, deadly examples - vigilante terrorist groups: Boko Haram (which is translated “Western education is sin”). That is the group that captured all those schoolgirls in Nigeria); Al Shabab (Somalia); and
the truly terrorizing Islamist State of Syria & Levant (in Syria, Turkey, and surrounding countries). They kill citizens of their own countries in an attempt to enforce Sharia, an extremely strict way of life. Al Qaeda views this group as more terroristic group than they are.

Proverbs 4.20-24 - “My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech and put devious talk far from you.”

Summary of the lessons: “This parable teaches us that we do not have the knowledge or standing, no matter how holy we may think we are, to sit in final judgment on other people. That final judgment is to be left to one who does know, who is able - God. God allows us to live our lives, warning us that one day, at the harvest, God will then decide who is wheat and who is weed.”

Matthew 13.27-30 – “And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

So then,…what’s it gonna be?…smoking section, or non? Amen.