

February 2nd, 2020
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Standing on Kingdom Ground
Sermon #4 Title: Counterfeit Christianity
Sermon #4 Text: (Matthew 13:24-30)

I'm going to surprise you this morning. I found an article this week, that was published in 2010.... By CNN. 10 years ago. The article is titled:

- More Teens Becoming Fake Christians.
- It is a rather lengthy article, written by a liberal professor who has some serious theological problems that we would deem to be very heretical. Nonetheless this professor from Princeton participated in a National Religious Youth Study. But here is the candidness that their study revealed...

"a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary and the author of "Almost Christian," a new book that argues that many parents and pastors are unwittingly passing on this self-serving strain of Christianity."

- Though three out of four American teenagers claim to be Christian, fewer than half practice their faith, only half deem it important, and most can't talk coherently about their beliefs, the study found.
- (the author) - says parents are the most important influence on their children's faith, places the ultimate blame for teens' religious apathy on adults. Some adults don't expect much from youth pastors. They simply want them to keep their children off drugs and away from premarital sex.

- (they) often practice a "gospel of niceness" where faith is simply doing good, and not ruffling any feathers..."
- And then even that article dives off into a version of Christianity that is not the Bible.

Here is a danger that must be dealt with; and that is the danger of saying, "there are so many ideas, so many versions of Christianity... no one can know anything for certain, and so we must just recognize all things Christian, live and let live!"

- The truth is, Yes there are so many ideas...
- But Jesus said, there is only ONE version, and the rest are PERVERSIONS, and disciples are to know that.
- This is the parable about the Counterfeit Christian.

- Someone might think – Since there are so many phonies, then they all are... Or since there are so many differences, none are different... - All of the above is dead wrong, and that's what Jesus explains in this parable.

The Parable is found in verses 24-30
The Explanation is found in verses 36-43

Notice first just the picture of the parable...

- A man sows his field in wheat
- Under cover of night, an enemy comes in and sows "darnel" mixed in with the wheat.
- After a season of growth, the difference becomes evident...

- The man's servants ask what to do about it, and the man says essentially, "nothing right now" – We will deal with it at the harvest.

*note – Now that's the unexplained picture that Jesus paints.

- A good man with good seed
 - His enemy mixes in some bad seed
 - The good man sorts it out at the end
- And Jesus said "the kingdom of heaven is just like this."
- That's the picture!

What is the purpose of this parable? – It is so the disciples of Jesus will know what to expect to happen within the confines of Christianity until Jesus returns.

- This parable is ultimately about the full history of Christianity, and the coming Harvest of humanity at the end of the age..
 - It is a big picture parable...
 - It is ultimately given for the "encouragement" of the disciples.
 - Jesus is telling us about what will happen, so that when it does happen, and we see it, it won't mean what we may think it means. – It won't mean the disciples are failing, it will mean that all things are happening as Jesus revealed.

Here's the idea – when they begin to see all that is wrong within public Christianity, they won't become confused, discouraged and defeated... Rather they can say, "yep, just as Jesus told us it would be."

Now here's the explanation – vs 36-43, and there are three general overriding themes that come from this parable.

I. The Development of the Kingdom

*Note – The picture is of a crop from beginning to end. From the sowing of the seed to the harvest of the fruit, and everything in the middle. It is a picture of development from the beginning to the end, and we note a couple of things that are always happening in the development of the Christ's kingdom on earth.

A. Christian Cultivation – "children of the kingdom"

*Note – There is the ongoing cultivation of growing more and more Christians!

1.) Note some points here Jesus states...

- a.) the field is the Word
- b.) the good seed is the children of the Kingdom (the saved)
- c.) the one planting the children of the Kingdom is Jesus Himself.

- He does the saving of the soul...He does the germinating of life...He intentionally puts His Christians in this world...

*note – In the previous parable the seed was the Word of God. In this parable the Seed is the Product of the Word of God. It is what happens when the Word of God lands in good soil, and germinates life into a dead spirit, and grows a living breathing Christian!

- There is no other place to plant the kingdom, than in the world, and there is no other way to develop the kingdom than except through Christ Himself!

B. Counterfeit Cultivation – "children of the wicked one"

*Note – The late Dr. Wiersbe points out the fact that the enemy did not uproot the wheat, he merely set out to do damage by confusion!

- Satan could not uproot what Christ had planted...but he could plant his side by side, so as to 1.) Anger the Lord, and 2.) Diminish His work.

- What he cannot stop, he will try to taint! What he cannot steal, he will try to spoil.

*Note – How are the children of the wicked “cultivated?”

(Now note something.... – the world only knows two kinds of people – the saved and the lost...

- but this parable paints a picture of two-kinds of lost...

#A – There is the “Out and Out Lost”

#B – There are the “Tares”

- The out and out lost are never confused for being Christians. – The tares are those who look the most like Christians, without being Christians.

- No one ever confused a scrub brush for whole wheat!

- The unfocused, untrained, and ignorant eye, will readily confuse a “tare” for a “wheat.”

- These are the religious, or dare we say the “Christian Lost.”

*Note – How is that?

- How do you become a Christian? – By genuine faith in Christ Jesus. Faith that repents of your sin; faith that causes you to want to obey God; faith that causes you pain when you sin.

- Now here is the next question...

- How does a lost person become a “child of the devil?” How does a lost person become a “Tare.”

- The same way the Pharisees became “children of the devil” they “gave themselves to a religious lie!”

- they gave themselves to a belief that does not save!

*Note – Do you realize that the devil has an entire “Christian” system that counterfeits all things pertaining to Redemption!

#1 – He has a False Word – Galatians 1:7-8 – “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”

#2 – He has a False Jesus – 2 Corinthians 11:4 – Paul was afraid the Corinthians would accept “another Jesus”

#3 – He has False Apostles and False Preachers – 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 – “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

#4 – He has False Churches - which is what the very next parable is about – A false church system...

#5 – He has a False Spirit – an Unholy Spirit – 2 Corinthians 11:4 – “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”

#6 – He has False Doctrines – 1st Timothy 4:1 – “seducing spirits and doctrines of devils”

#7 – He has a False Return – 1st John 2:18 – “ye have heard that antichrist shall return.”

*Note – Now all of that being said, alongside true Christianity, Satan has laid a parallel, counterfeit Christianity, complete with a gospel, a Jesus, a spirit, a doctrine, churches, ministers, angels, beliefs, philosophies, and a host of all other things next right next to the true realities of Bible.

- A lost person becomes a “Tare”, or False wheat, when they give themselves to Satan’s substitutes – to gospel red herrings, and to Christ’s counterfeits.

- As we have said many times, - what Christ fits – Satan counterfeits.

- it will be cultivated among the wheat, as long as Christ is cultivating wheat!

C. Coming Culmination – vs 40 – “As therefore the tares are gathered together and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world.”

*Note – One of the most emphatic points about the parable is the fact that there is a Harvest! – There will be a conclusion, and there is a plan for the harvest!

1.) vs 30 – the wheat will be gathered into My barn.

2.) – the tares will be burned in destruction...
- There is no redemption in counterfeit Christianity.

*Note – There will be no such thing as someone saying, “Well at least didn’t they do some good?” – Doesn’t that count for something?

Not one bit.

- it’s not what the owner planted

- it is what the enemy wanted

- it is entirely destructive to all eternal things...

*Note – One preacher put it this way... - A counterfeit \$20 will buy some food... A counterfeit \$20 may buy some clothes... on the front end... But it won’t pass the bank examiner.

- Furthermore a counterfeit \$20 that purchases food, has done nothing more than rob and steal through lying means.

There is a culmination to the development of the Kingdom

II. The Discernment in the Kingdom

*Note – The second thing here are just necessary facts that every disciple is to put into their spiritual tool chest.

A. The Fact of Tares – “the children of the wicked are...”

1.) They do exist!

*note – Over the years, I have preached this from other passages of scripture, and by and large, most everyone nods in agreement that this is so... and then there are still some of those people that still run off accepting and believing anyone that can spell Jesus without looking!

2.) False Christians EXIST, and the primary point of me saying that, is to say stop accepting all things Christian, as Christian!

- Satan, and false Christians always have on the façade of “goodness” and “spirituality,” and a spirit of “feel goodism,” –

and it is incumbent on every Christian to acknowledge this is so!

B. The Feature of Tares

1.) Foliage but no Fruit!

a.) no real fruit in their lives...

- their nature becomes more Biblical...
- their character more humble
- their person more like Jesus
- their thinking more scriptural
- their desires less secular
- their doctrine more convictional

- They become less and less like the natural man, and become more and more like Biblical man, inside and out!

2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

1st John 3:3 – “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1st John 3:14 – “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

- and on and on and on....

In the tares there may be an outward look – but there is no inward change – there is no fruit!

If you would be, the kind of person you are now, had you never been saved... Biblically speaking ... you’ve never been saved.

- If you can see a difference in the kind of person you would be, and the kind of person Jesus has made you.... Praise God you are a new Creature!

C. The Future of Tares

1.) Nothing short of hell. – burned in the fire.

D. The Forbearance of Tares

1.) now what are the servants of God to do about the tares?

Vs 28-30 - *“The servants said unto Him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them... Let them both grow together until the harvest...”*

a.) Do not root them up – you would damage some wheat.

b.) Let them grow

c.) Let the Lord sort them out!

*Note – Now that’s as plain as Jesus could make it!

- Here’s the skinny – “know they are there... discern who they are... let the Lord deal with them in the end...

Warren Wiersbe writes it best this way – What is our Task? -- “True and false will grow together until the end, and God will separate them. Our job is not to try to “clean up” the world, although we should do all we can to better society. This does not mean we should not use discipline in the local church. The church is not the kingdom of heaven. God commands us to judge sin and discipline Christians who would hinder the

growth of the church by godless living (see 1 Cor. 5 and Matt. 18:15–18). Our job is to plant the Word in hearts and let God “plant” us in places where we can bear fruit for His glory.

- Since I couldn't say it better, I just told you what he said.

There is the Development of the Kingdom

There is the Discernment in the Kingdom

III. The Delight from the Kingdom

*Note – Now note – the majority of this parable is about the counterfeit Christian... but it is not silent about the result for the real Christian. Jesus does not merely tell the disciples about the dark clouds of the day....He doesn't leave it, without giving them the sunlight of glory!

- What is to become of the Wheat?

A. Gathered to the King – “gather the wheat into my barn.”

1.) At the Harvest, there will be a final gathering of all the saints of all time, gathered to the King!

*Note – Now Paul said we are not preventing those who have gone to sleep in the Lord, they are with Him. – Right now, some of the saints of the Lord are with Him.... But not all of them.

- Remember the field is the world. (the created order)

- the harvest is at the “end of the created order” –vs

40

- Every person that has ever been redeemed from Adam and Eve, until the final redeemed soul, will be gathered together into one place, at one time, in the presence of the ONE person who is our LORD, and SAVIOR.

B. Glory for the King – “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

1.) We will shine forth as His GLORY!

- as His Goodness

- as His HARVEST of HIS GREAT WORK

WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE!

Conclusion:

The once mighty Napoleon is reported to have made this statement: “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but on what foundation did we rest the creatures of our genius? Upon force. But Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love; and at this hour, millions of persons would die for Him.

“I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth to become food for the worms. Such is the fate of him who has been called the ‘great Napoleon.’ What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored and is still existing over the whole earth.”