

## **Sunday School Lesson for the Month of May 2021**

### **The Pretenders**

(Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

**(Sunday, May 2, 2021)**

In none of Jesus' parables do we find a clearer picture of the true purpose and tactics of the Devil than in this parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Here we see plainly that the Devil is committed to the destruction of anyone and everything that has the stamp of God's goodness on it.

In this almost frightening parable, Jesus was trying to impress three lessons upon His followers: First, He underscored the validity of the owner of the field in which the seed was sown; Secondly, He introduced the invader, who planned and calculated to undermine the work of the owner; and finally, undoubtedly with sadness, He described the pretenders, the offspring of the invader's work.

#### **I. The Owner! (vs. 24, 37-38)**

- A. The field in this parable belonged to this man. It had its boundaries; it was identifiable. This man took great pride in his field. He had cultivated it and prepared it for sowing. He was a conscientious, purposeful farmer. He intended to raise wheat, and he marshaled all of his agricultural skills to do the very best he could.
- B. This is still God's property on which we live! Sometimes we forget that fact because of the evil around us. At no time has God relinquished His property. The Devil has been described as "a squatter" in this world. A squatter is one who settles on land he has no right to and works it for his own advantage. This is what lies behind Christ's speaking of the sower sowing the seed in his field. The world, ultimately, is not the property of the one who is forever sowing evil seeds in it.

## **(Sunday, May 9, 2021)**

- C. No part of this world has the Lord forfeited to the Devil. This is why Jesus commissioned His followers to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” In Paul’s epistle to the Romans, he wrote, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God” (8:22). When Adam and Eve sinned, this world was cursed; since that day it has borne the stigma of that divine displeasure. Still the world withers in spiritual agony.
- D. The owner represents the Lord Jesus, fulfilling His mission. While He was on earth, He did the sowing personally. Then, before He was crucified and ascended to the Father in Heaven, Christ commissioned His followers to carry on his work of sowing, and what is the “seed” he is sowing? – It represents the sons and daughters of the Kingdom of God.

How can we summarize what Jesus tells us about the owner of the field? - He is the Son of God! He is also the one who “sows the seed” from which grows believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. He sows in all the field. The whole world is His, and He longs to save those in every corner of His world.

## **(Sunday, May 16, 2021)**

### **II. The Invader! (vs. 25, 39)**

We are not to misunderstand the phrase, “while everyone was sleeping” to suggest carelessness or irresponsibility. Rather, it means that the farmer and his hands had done all they could. They had prepared the field and had carefully sown the seed. There was nothing more they could do at that point. There is an accurate picture of the sensitive work of the Holy Spirit in converting sinners of their sins and planting in their hearts the gospel seed.

Jesus was specific about the enemy: he was the particular enemy of the sower: he said, “His enemy came.” That which the Devil hates about Christians is Christ in them. Thus, when Christ is truly being honored in our lives, we are more than ever the target of the Devil’s attack.

**(Sunday, May 23, 2021)**

**III. The Pretenders! (vs. 26, 38)**

What is the fruit of this seed sown secretly in the nighttime? (vs. 28-30) The servants wanted desperately to go out through the field and pull up every tiny blade of tares, which had begun to grow. But they received this astonishing advice from the owner of the field: “Let both grow together until the harvest.” In other words, there was no way they could get every single blade of the choking tare that had begun to sprout up. Furthermore, in their zeal, the servants would have pulled up many blades of the wheat.

In these words, Christ counseled His disciples to have patience in the face of all the havoc that evil seems to be creating in the midst of God’s working. It is a great temptation to wade into a situation in our indignation and straighten out the problem once and for all.

A. Jesus’ solution was to “let both grow together until the harvest.”

Sometimes in our zeal to have what I call a “holy church,” we only make it easier for self. Righteousness to flourish in the midst of the holiness. It is often the case that when we root up all of the “sins” in the church, we do little more than make room for the subtle and even more destructive “sins of the spirit” – the holier – than – thou attitude, the spiritual snobbery, the “super-saints” who, armed with their bibles, have the last word on what is wrong with everyone who doesn’t agree with their interpretation of Christianity.

**(Sunday, May 30, 2021)**

B. This does not mean that we are not to battle against evil when we see it clearly. Jesus said that persons who are unrepentant of their blatant and open sins are to be excluded from the fellowship of the church. In spite of these rare and exceptional cases, Jesus is saying in this parable that, for the most part, it is hard to wait, lest in our haste, we bruise the tender wheat, the young, sensitive, impressionable Christians who inevitably get hurt in such situations.

The final judgement is going to be full of surprises. When the time comes for the separation of the goats from the sheep, the wheat from the tares, we most likely will see how distorted our best judgment was in many situations. For in that day, Jesus, our Lord and King, will come with His sickle reap His wheat. Then all of our sickles of judgement will fall to the ground, along with all of the illegitimate “crowns of righteousness” we have put on our heads! We must never forget who the final judge is. It is God himself and He can find, bring home, and sit at His table even the worst who have repented of their sins and called Him their Lord and Savior.