

**Sermon Title:** *The Wheat and the Weeds: Trusting God's Timing*

**Text:** *Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43 (CSB)*

Good morning, City Hope Church! My name is Steven and I have the honor of serving as one of the Pastors here. If you haven't noticed already.... Clearly I'm not Pastor Bobby but rest assured, he is still our Pastor and will be here next week. However, I'm so glad you're here with us today. Whether this is your first time or you're a long-time part of our family, we are so grateful you have decided to join us today. If you are visiting with us for the first time, **take just a moment and scan QR Code or text the number on the screen or complete the card in your seat.** Our team would love to connect with you, we always say we don't want anything from you, but we would love for you to take the time to text or complete the card, that way we know how to connect.

Before we jump into the message today, I have one quick announcement. For all of the students currently in 6th - 12th grade, Beach Camp is just around the corner. Registration is still open, however Memorial day weekend, the price will increase. So be sure to register ASAP! Just as we do every year, we offer scholarships to students who need them, to help offset the cost. If you and your family would be interested in donating a scholarship toward a student to attend Beach Camp, please find Cam (our Student Minister) or myself after the services and we would love to give you more information about that.

Today we are going to be continuing in our summer sermon series called Stories, where we will be walking through the parables in the Bible all summer. So if you have a story that you would like to share, please let me or one of our team members know after the service today.

As we continue in that series today, I believe God has something specific to say to each of us through His Word today.

Let me start off by asking a question: Have you ever looked at our world and wondered, "God, why aren't You doing something about all this evil?"

I know I have!

If you turn on the TV or scroll on social media, it doesn't take long to see injustice, deception, violence, pride, brokenness, and so much more happening everywhere. And a lot of the time people trying to live for Jesus are right in the mix of it.

However, Jesus knew we would feel this way. He actually spoke to that exact tension through a story/parable in Matthew 13, the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds.

Don't worry if you're not a farmer (I'm clearly not either), because this is not just a farming analogy. It's actually a hope-filled teaching that shows us why God sometimes delays but how we should live in the meantime.

Let's dive in!

Stand with me as we read the Word together, if you don't have your Bible, the verses will be on the screen. Matthew chapter 13, beginning in verse 24.

### **Matthew 13: 24-30 & 36-43**

He presented another parable to them: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and left. When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared.' "The landowner's servants came to him and said, 'Master, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?' "An enemy did this,' he told them. "'So, do you want us to go and pull them up?' the servants asked him.

"No,' he said. 'When you pull up the weeds, you might also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I'll tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles to burn them, but collect the wheat in my barn.'"

Now skip down with me to verse 36, where Jesus explains this parable to His disciples:

"Then he left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.'"He replied, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; and the good seed—these are the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. "Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered 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 gather from his kingdom all who cause sin and those guilty of lawlessness. 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 their Father's kingdom. Let anyone who has ears listen.'"

### Let's Pray

I want to share three truths with us today from this parable

The first truth is this: **There is an enemy, but he doesn't get the final word.**

Jesus identified the sower of the good seed as the Son of Man.

The field is the world.

The good seed? the children of the kingdom (believers).

The weeds? Those are the children of the evil one. And yes, Jesus says the enemy is the devil.

I know hearing some of this may make some of us uncomfortable, but I do believe that is critical to recognize: **Jesus wants us to know there's more happening than what we can see. Evil isn't random...it's intentional. It's sown by an enemy.**

The Bible echoes this throughout. In **John 10:10, Jesus says... "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."**

As I was preparing for this message I read an article that said it like this,

The weeds Jesus refers to were likely *darnel*—a poisonous plant that closely resembled wheat.



Darnel



Wheat

- As Amanda and I were preparing and fundraising to move to Argentina, I was working at SRP, which was a local credit union. The training was intense to work for this credit union, we spent 4 weeks "money training". As an employee working at the credit union we didn't spend time studying fake money. We spent weeks hours feeling, seeing, handling the real thing. Why? Because when something fake shows up (which it did), you know it doesn't feel or look right.

In the same way, Satan is a counterfeiter. He doesn't plant obvious evil off in the distance; he plants imitation right alongside the real thing. So, we don't need to obsess over every deception the enemy plants, we need to stay close to what's real.

In other words: **Evil is not just out there, it's in here. It grows near what is good.**

But listen... according to this parable the enemy only got to sow. He does *not* get to reap.

Jesus is crystal clear, there will be a harvest. And the reapers will not be confused. The enemy might try to deceive us now, but his influence is temporary, his time is limited, and his fate is sealed.

Here's the second big truth: **We live in a mixed field, but God knows who's who.**

The servants in the parable noticed the weeds and immediately wanted to act: They said - *"Should we pull them up?"* But the master says, *"No, because you might uproot the wheat too."*

Why? Because wheat and darnel look almost exactly alike in the early stages of growth. You can't tell them apart at first until harvest time... and that takes time.

And that's the key: **Only time reveals the true nature of a seed.**

This is where many of us struggle.

We want to judge quickly.

We want to clean house.

We want to sort people out.

But Jesus warns us.... *"you might be pulling up what I'm still growing."*

- I think of people in my life who I wrote off early... and yet, years later, God radically transformed them. One guy I went to school with was wild! He was the ringleader of everything not good, he was the kind you assume is too far gone. Well today...he's a full time missionary sharing his story and Bible all around the world. Only God knew what was going on under the surface, not me!

In the Church we will always have and be around a mixture of believers and pretenders, faithful followers and false converts. But it's not our job to sort them. It's our job to **stay faithful**.

We are terrible judges of the heart. Only God sees the root. Only He can separate the wheat from the weeds without doing damage to His crop.

That's why Scripture tells us clearly...**1 Samuel 16:7 – "For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."**

So instead of playing the judge, we need to...

Keep growing in our personal faith.

Stay planted in the truth through the gospel.

And trust that God sees the full picture.

The third truth is this: **Judgment is coming, but so is justice.**

This parable does not end in confusion. It ends with clarity.

Jesus says that at the end of the age, the angels will come, and everything that causes sin, all the deception, abuse, corruption, and rebellion, will be removed and destroyed.

According to scripture, I don't believe that is harsh.... I believe it's holy.

God's justice doesn't come because He's cruel. It comes because He's *good*. **"Judgment is not just about punishment, it's about purification."**

Think about the people who have suffered under any sort of oppression or injustice. Don't they deserve a just God? Don't we long for evil to be held accountable?

And the Bible is clear: God does not overlook evil... **Romans 12:19 – “Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord.”**

That's exactly what Jesus promises: He will deal with it all. Not one weed will escape the fire and not one stalk of wheat will be overlooked.

And then Jesus says this and it's mind blowing when you sit back and think about.  
*“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom.”*

As a believer..... That's our future  
We will no longer be:  
Shadowed by weeds.  
Tangled in sin.  
Confused or uncertain.

Instead we will be...  
Bright  
Beautiful  
Completely pure and shining like people who belong to God forever.

So how should we live our lives, while the wheat and weeds are growing side by side?

Let me give you **three takeaways**:

**1. Stay faithful in the field.**

The world will stay mixed until harvest (the Lord's return).  
Don't lose heart when you see the weeds.  
Grow anyway. Bear fruit.

**Galatians 6:9 – “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”**

Keep your eyes on Jesus, not the distractions around you.

## **2. Stop trying to uproot what only God can judge.**

**James 4:12 – “There is one Lawgiver and Judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?”**

We're not called to be weed-pullers. We're called to be light-bearers.

So let's speak truth, walk in love, but don't assume God needs our help with the sorting. He's got it.

## **3. Share the gospel while there's still time.**

The harvest is coming, but it's not here yet. That means there's still time to reach people with the love of Jesus. Don't wait. Be bold. Be loving. Share His hope with someone.

As we close, I want to ask that everyone bow their heads.

If you're here today and you're feeling discouraged by all the “weeds” in your world, whether at work, at home, or maybe even here at Church... I want to remind you to: Trust His timing. He's not done yet. The harvest is coming.

Or maybe you're here and you're unsure where you stand with God. You're questioning whether you're wheat or weed. I want you to hear this clearly:

Jesus died for you.

He was planted in the ground and rose again so you could be part of His harvest.

He can transform your life from counterfeit to genuine, from someone who feels broken to someone who is whole and complete in Him, from darkness to light. He can give you the hope that you have been searching for.

The harvest hasn't come yet. There's still time.

Come to Him today.

## **Pray**

If you're here today and you're ready to surrender your life to Jesus, I want to invite you to pray this simple prayer with me. You don't have to get the words perfect; what matters is your heart. You can pray this in your heart or out loud, just mean it with everything in you:

Jesus, today I surrender.

I believe You died for my sins and rose again.

I ask You to forgive me.

Make me new.

I choose to follow You.

Thank You for loving me and saving me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer, we want to celebrate with you. This is the greatest decision you'll ever make! Please let us know by filling out a card in your seat, scanning the QR code on the screen, or texting the word "Jesus" to 833-337-9877. Please don't leave here without talking to someone from our team today, we want to walk with you in your next steps... Plus we have a little gift for you. Love you guys. Pastor Bryan, come on up here and give us some final announcements.