

3. Removing the weeds

In Jesus' parable the wheat and the weeds are removed when the angels harvest them at the end of the world. This image should cause us to reflect on the fate of those who choose to live in opposition to God. But we should also examine our own lives to see if weeds are creeping in.

7 Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. 8 But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. 9 Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. - 1 John 3:7-9 NLT

If we confess Jesus as Lord then our lives have been set apart for God's Kingdom purposes. We should be living in a way that reflects His righteousness. If you found anything in Paul's list (2 Timothy 3:2-4) that you need God's power to overcome, pause now for a time to pray for the Spirit to help you live a godly life.

WRAP-UP

In this world there are weeds and wheat. They may look alike, but the wheat is poison. Satan wants to infiltrate the world with those who live opposed to God. Even if they act righteous, they are imposters if they reject the power of God's Holy Spirit to change them. As people of God's kingdom we must resist the things that cause destruction and live righteously by the power of God's Spirit within us.

MEMORY VERSE

They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

- 2 Timothy 3:5 NLT

Challenge-

Be aware of any weeds like unforgiveness, pride or a lack of self-control slipping into your life this week.

Pulling the Weeds

Flourish Week 3

INTRODUCTION

In the current sermon series, we are learning what it takes for us to flourish. We have considered the fertile soil of God's presence, His people, and His ways, and we have also considered creating an environment where people are noticed, disciplined, and welcomed. This week we see there are weeds in our garden. Jesus spoke about weeds in the same sermon which contained the parable of the farmer sowing seed. Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds is a sobering reminder of the ultimate destruction that results from a life lived in opposition to God.

Ice Breaker

What is your preferred method to remove weeds- dig them up, spray them, or weed- whack them?

Key Passage

27 "The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' 28 "An enemy has done this!" the farmer exclaimed. "Should we pull out the weeds?" they asked. 29 "No," he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.'"

- Matthew 13:27-30 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. *Where did they come from?*

When we studied the parable of the farmer and seeds (Matt 13:3-8), we found that the evil one was snatching away what God had planted. In this parable our enemy returns. Read the key passage above.

In our key passage, the workers asked the farmer where the weeds came from. Luckily, this is one of the parables that Jesus explained to His disciples.

27 "The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' ...37 Jesus replied, "The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. 39 The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels. - Matthew 13:27, 37-39 NLT

This may be a bit of a shock. What are the weeds and where are they found? What do you think it means to be people who belong to the evil one versus people of the Kingdom? Why do you think God would allow His good seed to remain among the weeds?

Jesus has placed His people, the good seed, on this earth. This is not our home. Our ultimate allegiance is to God's Kingdom and we are citizens of heaven. But not everyone in this world belongs to God. While we are on this earth, we are Jesus' representatives, sharing the good news with those who are headed toward destruction. It may be more comfortable to stay among others who share your faith, but you are needed to shine the light of hope for those who don't yet know Jesus.

2. Identifying Weeds

In this parable Jesus refers to a specific plant as the weed. It is called *zizánion* and resembles wheat or barley in appearance, and this weed is poisonous. The devil uses people to spread his poison. The first thing we must do is recognize the weeds.

*10 So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.
- 1 John 3:10 NLT*

John gives us one way to distinguish between wheat and the weeds. What is the difference between the two? Why do you think he looks at

the way people live rather than pointing to a prayer of salvation they once prayed? How does 2 Tim 3:5 shed light on this question?

*5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!
- 2 Timothy 3:5 NLT*

In his letter to Timothy, Paul lists many of the traits that we will see in ungodly people. There are so many ways that Satan spreads his poison.

2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God- 2 Timothy 3:2-4 NLT

Which of these seems most dangerous to you? This world is a spiritual battleground. What are the opposite attributes we are to employ which combat our enemy's strategy outlined in these verses?

9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) 10 And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. - Romans 8:9-11 NLT

Not only do we want to stay away from the ungodly people described by Paul, we want to ensure that we don't become people like that. In 2 Tim 3:5 Paul says they act religious but reject the power that can make them godly. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to you. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live a godly life if we allow Him to have His way.