

7/5/26

Sermon Title: The Parables of the Weeds, the Mustard Seed, and the Yeast

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 13:24-43

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷ “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

²⁸ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

²⁹ “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them.

³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.

³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

³⁴ Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.

³⁵ So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷ He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one,

³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Jesus continued to teach the crowds in parables.

Following the Parable of the Seed Falling on Four Kinds of Soil, He told another parable involving the sowing of seed.

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“The good seed” represents the children of God—the saints.

“The man who sowed the good seed in his field” is Jesus Christ, and “the field” represents the world in which we live.

Jesus deliberately calls it “His field,” declaring that it belongs to Him.

Indeed, the whole world belongs to the Lord.

(psa24:1) The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

(Psa24:2) for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

Yet a problem arose in this field.

While everyone was asleep, an enemy secretly came and sowed weeds among the wheat.

These weeds were poisonous.

If eaten, they could cause severe illness, including vomiting and diarrhea, and in extreme cases even death.

Moreover, when they first sprouted, they looked remarkably similar to wheat, making them difficult to distinguish.

According to the Law, such an act was unlawful.

(Levi 19:19) Keep my decrees. Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

Jesus explains that the weeds represent the sons of the evil one—those who cause others to stumble and who practice wickedness and lawlessness.

The enemy is the devil.

The devil is the spiritual enemy who opposes God and seeks to separate people from Him.

From the Garden of Eden until today, he has continually tempted humanity and led countless people toward destruction.

He plants those under his influence among God's people in order to hinder their spiritual growth, harass them, and persecute them.

At first, the servants did not notice what had happened.

It was only when the crop began to mature that they realized weeds had grown among the wheat, leaving them puzzled as to where they had come from.

They could not understand how weeds had appeared in a field where only good seed had been sown.

We often ask the same question: If God created a good world, how did evil enter it?

The servants asked the master whether they should pull up the weeds immediately.

But the master told them to let both grow together until the harvest.

In other words, "Leave this matter to Me. It is not your responsibility but Mine. Judgment belongs to My sovereign authority."

At the time of harvest, the master would instruct the harvesters first to gather the weeds and burn them, and then to gather the wheat into his barn.

He did not want the wheat to be uprooted along with the weeds.

The growing season represents the period leading up to the final harvest, when evil reaches its full expression, while the harvest represents the day of God's final judgment.

For believers who suffer ridicule, hostility, and persecution from unbelievers, this teaching can be discouraging.

We may long for immediate justice and desire to see evil removed without delay.

Yet our disappointment often comes because we do not know God's timing.

We are called to trust the righteous Judge, patiently leaving all judgment in His hands until the appointed day.

On that day—the Day of Judgment—the righteous God will judge the weeds, that is, those who practice lawlessness, and cast them into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

But He will bring His people into the kingdom He has promised them. It will be the glorious moment when they receive eternal life and the crown of righteousness.

What a glorious and triumphant day that will be!

Jesus then continued with two more parables—the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Yeast—to teach about the growth and transforming power of the kingdom of God.

He began with the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.

³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

Plant seeds are remarkably small, and among them the mustard seed is especially tiny.

It is so small that even a gentle breeze can blow it away.

Yet when it is planted in the ground, takes root, and grows, it can become a large shrub or tree about three meters (ten feet) tall, with birds coming to perch in its branches.

Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed.

Through this parable, He teaches both the growth and the transforming power of God's kingdom.

Although the kingdom may appear insignificant and unimpressive at its beginning, its end will be glorious.

Just as the tiny mustard seed produces growth far beyond what its size would suggest, so the kingdom of heaven begins with what seems like small and insignificant faith, yet ultimately brings about great and extraordinary change.

Indeed, the kingdom of God began with Jesus Christ, was entrusted to the twelve disciples, then to the one hundred twenty believers, and has continued to grow until it has become a mighty tree through which people from every nation are being brought to salvation.

The "birds of the air" symbolize the many nations and peoples that gathered under the protection of great empires such as Assyria and Babylon.

In the Old Testament, birds nesting in a great tree often represent nations finding shelter under the influence of a powerful kingdom.

Therefore, the statement, "the birds came and perched in its branches," illustrates how greatly the mustard tree—that is, the kingdom of heaven—has grown.

It also points to people from every corner of the world, weary from the burdens of life and longing for peace and rest, finding their true refuge, peace, and rest in Jesus Christ.

Jesus then tells the Parable of the Yeast.

Like the Parable of the Mustard Seed, this parable also illustrates the growth and transforming power of the kingdom of heaven.

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

Yeast is a leavening agent produced through fermentation.

In Jesus' day, a small portion of fermented dough containing yeast was mixed into a new batch of dough.

Although the amount of yeast was very small compared to the entire batch, it gradually worked through the whole dough and caused it to rise.

Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like yeast.

The kingdom of God may appear as small and unnoticed as a mustard seed or a little yeast in its beginning.

Yet it possesses divine life and transforming power.

It grows, transforms lives, and continues to expand until its influence reaches far and wide.

On that day, Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of heaven only in parables.

³⁴ Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.

³⁵ So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”

The phrase "things hidden since the creation of the world" refers to God's righteous work of redemption—His divine plan of salvation that had been hidden throughout the ages.

What had once remained concealed was now being revealed through Jesus Christ. Through His teaching, His miracles, His sacrificial death, and His resurrection, God's redemptive plan would be fully disclosed and made known to the world.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,
Jesus has taught us the wonderful mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through these three parables.

First, through the Parable of the Weeds, He answers the question that God's people have wrestled with throughout every generation:

"If God created and rules this world, why does evil flourish?"

"Why do the righteous suffer while the wicked seem to prosper?"

Jesus' answer is simple:

"Let both grow together until the harvest."

Judgment belongs to God alone.

In His perfect time, God Himself will execute righteous judgment.

On the Day of Judgment, He will send His harvesters to gather the weeds and throw them into eternal fire, while gathering the wheat into His barn.

Our responsibility is simply to trust the righteous Judge.

God does not delay removing the weeds because He is protecting the wicked.

Rather, He is protecting the wheat, lest it be harmed while the weeds are being uprooted.

This is an expression of His love and tender care for His children.

How, then, should we live in such an evil world?

Jesus answers that question through the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Yeast.

The kingdom of God begins as small as a mustard seed resting in the palm of your hand and as hidden as yeast mixed into dough.

Yet within it is the very life and power of God that transforms the world.

Therefore, the kingdom of God will never cease to advance.

It will continue to grow until the day God brings it to its glorious completion.

When Jesus first spoke these parables, His disciples were insignificant compared with the Jewish religious leaders and the mighty Roman Empire.

They were few in number and seemingly powerless.

Yet they possessed the very life of the kingdom of God.

The Jewish religious system eventually disappeared, and even the seemingly invincible Roman Empire passed into history.

But the kingdom that Jesus established through His disciples spread throughout the world and continues to expand to this very day.

Although our faith may seem as small as a mustard seed, and our influence as hidden as yeast in a lump of dough, the life that God has planted is never insignificant.

Just as the mustard seed grows into a large tree where birds find shelter, and a small amount of yeast transforms the entire batch of dough, the kingdom of heaven may begin in a humble way, but it will continue to grow until it transforms the world.

Plant mustard-seed faith wherever God has placed you—in your home, your workplace, your church, and your community.

Be like yeast, quietly influencing the world around you with the life of Christ.

When your small faith is placed in God's hands, it will become a great tree that offers shelter to many and a transforming power that brings life to the world.

Do not be discouraged by the apparent prosperity of the wicked.

Do not be consumed with anger over the injustice you see in this world.

Instead, trust the righteous God who will ultimately bring about perfect justice, and persevere faithfully until the end.

Our Lord has promised, "The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

May we hold fast to that promise, persevere with unwavering faith until our Lord returns, and faithfully devote ourselves to the work of His kingdom.

May the Lord grant this to each one of us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.