

**How the Kingdom Comes
(Bearing Fruit in the Presence of Evil)**

Matthew 13:24-43

March 28, 2004

Peter Hiatt

Children's Sermon

Aram: I've got something here.

Children: An apple!

Aram: An apple, yeah. Now, that's a nice-looking apple, isn't it? It's a nice-looking apple, pretty significant, nice and shiny, desirable to the eyes. Here's my question: How many seeds do you think are in this apple?

Children: Five . . . three . . .

Aram: I have a knife here, and I'm going to open up the apple. I count two seeds. Here's my next question: How many apples are inside that seed?

Children: One . . . no one knows . . .

Aram: God knows, doesn't He? But let's guess . . .

Children: Twenty! Twenty-seven! A hundred! More than twenty-five but less than one hundred.

Aram: Maybe thousands? Maybe millions? Isn't it cool that God can take a little, insignificant seed like this and produce incredible amounts of fruit? Isn't that cool? That's what God loves to do.

[Movie Clip: History of the World: Part I — Moses is standing on the mountain top. God is speaking to him.]

God: I shall give you my laws, and you shall take them unto the people.

Moses: Yes, Lord! Lord, I shall give these laws unto thy people.

Moses: Hear me, oh hear me, you people, the Lord Jehovah has given unto you these fifteen [Moses drops one of the three tablets. It breaks into hundreds of pieces] . . . ten . . . ten commandments for all to obey.

I wonder what the other five were? Probably something about telemarketing . . . maybe “Don’t operate heavy machinery after taking antihistamines” or “Thou shalt not wear plaid.”

Well, Moses was commanded to “put forth” the Law before the people. It is the old covenant of law, conditional on their obedience to establish the kingdom of Israel. But what if they screw it up? Like what if Moses drops five commandments? Or what if they don’t obey? What if they don’t stay pure? God gives elaborate instructions for keeping Israel pure, for rooting out all weeds, impurities, and evil. If they mess up, the kingdom fails. And, of course, we know they messed up. So Israel was plundered by Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans.

That was the old covenant, and Jesus inaugurated the new covenant. He came preaching the kingdom of heaven.

You’ve probably heard the old story that after Jesus ascended, the angels gathered around to hear the stories of His life on earth. He told of His miracles, teachings, death, and resurrection. When He finished His story, the archangel Michael asked, “But Lord, what happens now?” Jesus answered, “I have left behind eleven faithful men who will preach my kingdom. They will build my church.” Troubled,

Michael responds, “But what if these men fail? What then?” In a slow, thoughtful manner, Jesus replies, “I have no other plan.”

No other plan to build His kingdom! Yikes! What if . . . what if . . . what if we screw up?

We’d better be careful.

We’d better get busy.

We’d better *do* something!

We need to ask:

1. Where is the kingdom in America? It almost seems invisible. Maybe we’d better do something to make it *visible*.
2. And when we do see it, why is it so small? Maybe we’d better do something to make it *big*.
3. Why is the kingdom infected with evil? Maybe we’d better do something to *clean it up* . . . like a crusade to uproot all the evil, every last weed.

A friend of mine had a vision. She thought it regarded someone she knew. She saw a stalk of grain, and then she saw a weed that began to choke out the stalk. One day as she was thinking on that vision, she heard a voice, and the voice said, “Be afraid. Be very afraid.”

So maybe we’d better *do* something. Maybe there are weeds among us and God is calling us to root them out.

Matthew 13:24:

Another parable He put forth to them . . .

By writing He “put forth” a parable, Matthew is once again comparing Jesus to Moses, who “put forth” the Law in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

- The Law is visible, immediate, and decisive. We see it, we know what to do, we decide to do it, and we *do* it.
- A parable is invisible, takes time, and is indecisive. That is, it’s meaning isn’t obvious. We digest it, and it changes us. And we don’t know exactly what it’s going to do . . . like a seed.

Jesus just told the parable of the seed word and the four soils. Now He “puts forth” these parables of the kingdom, the kingdom of heaven.

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let . . .’”

That word “let” is not simply a verb tense. It’s actually a very meaningful verb in Greek: “aphiemi”; the noun is “aphesis.” It’s translated variously, but here it’s “let.”

“Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

*“I will open My mouth in parables;
I will utter things kept secret from the
foundation of the world.”*

That’s interesting. It means Jesus is not simply telling us more Old Testament stuff. This stuff was present in the Old

Testament but hidden in the Old Testament, hidden “from the foundation of the world.”

Did you know that your name was written in a book “from the foundation of the world”? Because a lamb was slain “from the foundation of the world.” Jesus just said, “The kingdom is like leaven hidden in flour.” I bet it’s been hidden “from the foundation of the world.”

- Leaven is mixed in at the start of the bread-making process.
- Leaven itself is yeast.
- The leaven is so small, it’s hidden; small, hidden, yet everywhere.
- It’s hidden and concentrated in leavened dough, yet yeast is present on dust particles in the air.
- And it’s alive. When you leaven bread, you mix life with death, and the life infects the death.

Yeast makes bread rise through fermentation. In that process, the yeast produces warm carbon dioxide, which makes the bread rise. Warm carbon dioxide is *breath*. In the beginning, God breathed into dead dust, and man became a living being. Breath is wind and wind is spirit and the wind of breath is also a Word. Jesus just taught The Word is seed. God created all things by speaking His Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-3, 14a)

So when Jesus rose from the dead, the Word rose—the Breath rose.

The Word by which all things are created—
The Word which maintains all things rose in
this dead world.

Through the cross, the kingdom which was mysteriously present yet hidden in all things was made manifest as the Word rose. In John 20:22, Jesus breathes His breath into us. We preach His breath to the world. We preach His Word, and the kingdom comes. Yet it's not like it wasn't already there, everywhere and every when, "from the foundation of the world."

Well, this woman hides the leaven in three measures of flour. That would be over one hundred pounds of dough! I mean, she's preparing a great banquet. And check this out: According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the two classic examples of fermentation in human food production are:

1. the baking of bread
2. the making of wine

And, hey—Did you remember that according to Revelation 12, the harvest of the earth is bread and wine? And, oh yeah, in Matthew 9:37 Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful." We preached that it was . . .

. . . faith and mercy, that is,
. . . bread and wine, that is,
. . . body broken and blood shed, that is,
. . . *life*.

And, oh yeah, remember when Jesus took bread and wine and spoke word—breath—life into it saying, “This is my body and my blood for you”—a *great banquet*?

Well, anyway, it appears that this world has been infected with the kingdom, like bread dough is infected with yeast: invisible, unstoppable, inextricable since “the foundation of the world.” The kingdom is *not fragile*; it’s just that we’re half-baked . . . still being made in God’s image.

The Enemy can’t stop it. He can only lie about it to fill us with fear, whispering, “All I see is suffering, broken bodies, spilt blood, and Roman crosses. I don’t see any kingdom.” So in fear we think we must *do* something to make it visible: a program, a building, a society, an old Jerusalem. Then when those things crumble, we think the kingdom has crumbled. The world thinks the kingdom has failed when in fact it’s all around us growing, rising, like yeast in bread.

Jesus also said, “The kingdom is like a mustard seed . . . the smallest of seeds.” The Enemy can’t stop the seed, but he lies to us about seeds. He makes us despise small things: words, for instance. Yet a word of love can change the world, redeem a soul, and give birth to a new creation.

I just got back from the Dominican Republic where I was absolutely amazed at the wonderful things happening through Tom and Dana Larson and Healing Waters International: hundreds of thousands of gallons of clean water in Christ’s name for the poor of the Dominican Republic and soon Mexico. An *immense ministry*! Yet Tom traces it back to a word of love my father spoke to him years ago after a meeting at our old building.

And get this: Hundreds of thousands of gallons of fresh water is *not* the kingdom . . . unless that water is inhabited with words of faith and mercy. Then the kingdom is hidden in

the water. I think their slogan should be: “It’s the water and a lot more.”

The fruit of the kingdom is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Kingdom fruit isn’t a building or programs or organizations or even water. The fruit is of the Spirit and is itself more seed.

In the parable, the seed turns into a tree (a mustard tree). And that’s bizarre, for the mustard plant is more of a bush. Yet Jesus purposefully uses “dendron” in Greek—that is, “tree”—a tree so large the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. That’s an Old Testament picture of a great kingdom. Jesus is king of a great kingdom. We know Jesus is the Seed, and His cross is the Tree.

In the history of this world, few things seemed as small as one more naked Jew crucified on a tree outside Old Jerusalem. Yet that tree was planted “from the foundation of the world,” for the Lamb—the Word—the Meaning was slain “from the foundation of the world.” And this was *the* plan (singular)—the “plan for the fullness of time.”

Well, that tree has grown, hasn’t it? You birds make your home in its branches. Satan can’t stop it, but he lies about it so we despise the seed, so we despise small things like words of faith and mercy spoken from the crosses we bear.

In fear we think we must do something *big* to be seen by men.

In fear we think we must put a better spin on the kingdom: glossy brochures, health and wealth . . . we think we must *lie* and deny the cross.

In fear we think that we must make the kingdom big: make movements, organizations, politics, signs and

wonders, spectacle . . . throw ourselves from the temple and turn stones into bread. “Yet if we move mountains and have not love, we are nothing,” writes Paul.

Love can seem so small, yet it *is* the kingdom. Nothing is bigger or more solid or more real than love. Love is God. So if it’s love, it will grow, and nothing can stop it.

Matthew 13:34:

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

*“I will open My mouth in parables;
I will utter things kept secret from the
foundation of the world.”*

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will

gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

You'll remember from the parable of the soils that a person is a plant: dirt animated by a seed—a Word. Well, there is an Enemy that sows something too. Jesus stops short of calling it a seed, yet it's like a seed; not a good word, but a bad word, an anti-word—a lie. The Enemy sows tares, and you'll remember he does it while men are sleeping at night in the absence of light, the absence of truth, the absence of the master.

Evil is a mystery to us, and the Enemy is a mystery. George MacDonald wrote, "The darkness knows neither the light nor itself; only the light knows itself and the darkness also. None but God hates evil and understands it."

Well, we believe God created everything, yet God didn't create evil. So maybe evil is, like, *nothing*. As Julian of Norwich writes of her vision, "God does everything that is done, and God does not sin. I saw that sin is not something which is done."

So evil is, like, the presence of an absence, the reality of the unreal; like a shadow; like a lie; like death. Death is the absence of life, a shadow is the absence of light, and a lie is the absence of truth. So when you say, "Look at the shadow," you're saying, "Look at the absence of light." When you say, "Did you hear the lie?" you're asking, "Did you hear the absence of truth?"

But listen closely: Shadows and lies may kill—murder. The Enemy comes in the dark; he is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. From the beginning! That means he was never good.

I've spoken to him, and I hate him.

He is evil. He sows darkness and lies that become tares. When young, tares look like wheat, but they're not wheat.

So then, if we take this parable seriously, it implies some amazing things:

For one, it implies there are people who look like people but are *not* people. They're people of the lie, empty people, inhuman people, like zombies . . . but zombies that were never human, like machines that have no soul, no breath of God, no spirit *ever*.

Tares look like wheat when they're young. Yet when they're mature, they're obviously not wheat, for they have no fruit. So it seems you can know if someone is wheat by encountering the fruit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control). But you cannot know if they're a tare, for they could just be immature wheat.

This parable also seems to imply this: Tares don't *become* wheat. They don't convert. There's nothing to redeem. In other words, they never *were* wheat, and they never aspire to be wheat. They never *were* the first Adam, and they never aspire to the ultimate Adam. They can't conceive Adam, like tares can't conceive wheat.

So when people convert, it's not like tares turn into wheat; it's that the wheat finds out that it's wheat. As Luke

puts it in Acts 13:48, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

Now, that’s scandalous news if you worship the Declaration of Independence and believe that all wheat and all tares are created equal. It’s also scandalous news if you like to take credit for your salvation, thinking you’re wheat because you chose to be wheat, so salvation is to your credit, and the kingdom coming is dependent on you. If you believe that, this is *bad news*.

Yet it is absolutely *good news*, 100% gospel, if you’ve been worried that you might screw this whole thing up!

Good news: You were chosen, predestined, ordained unto eternal life, and so you believe.

Good seed from the foundation of the world, so the kingdom will come, and you can’t stop it.

But now, you’re probably thinking, “Oh, Lord, I hope I’m not a tare.” Well then, seek to be wheat. And Jesus said, “Seek and you will find.” Seek and you will be wheat. But you didn’t turn into wheat. You were wheat all along. Tares don’t seek to be wheat; they can’t even conceive fruit. Do you seek to bear love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control? If yes, then you must be wheat. Tares don’t seek love. They can’t conceive nor comprehend love. But “he who loves is born of God and knows God” (I John 4:7).

You may say, “I hate the thought that people like me are predestined to the furnace of fire.” Well, they’re not. People like you are wheat.

In Romans 9, Paul talks about “vessels of wrath created for destruction.” They’re not “children of God”

created for destruction, but “vessels of wrath.” In Romans 2, God’s wrath is God’s absence. Perhaps a tare is a vessel of wrath, is a body but no one is home.

My father told me he had a dream once that one of his friends was a vessel of wrath—a tare. It horrified him. I said, “Dad, if tares exist, I doubt one could be your friend. For you could never know one. There’s nothing to truly know. You could see one, yes, but love one, no. They’re incapable of love.”

Well, that can make your head spin, and perhaps I’m wrong in places, but do you see what this parable implies? I think it means: Everybody that’s anybody gets saved.

That is: God does not abandon His children to destruction.

That is: He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.

That is: Nothing is more powerful than the love that is God.

And even though Satan lies by planting lies that grow into nothing and nobody, if you love at all, you are *not* nothing or nobody; you are *somebody*. And everybody that’s anybody gets saved!

That helps me understand all the Scriptures that refer to all people being saved, like I Corinthians 15:52: “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” . . . while at the same time there are many verses that refer to some goats, tares, and vessels of wrath destroyed in the furnace of fire.

Maybe everybody that's anybody gets saved.

But now you may be thinking, "OK, I'm somebody. I'm wheat, but I think I'm also a tare. I'm like soil that's growing a wheat stalk and a tare stalk." John writes, "He who loves God is born of God and knows God. He who loveth not knoweth not God." Wow! That means I'm, like, two persons: one that loves and one that doesn't love; like an old man and a new man; like a sin nature and a spirit nature.

Well, maybe in this world we can be wheat and tares in one body. Karl Barth taught that we are *all* vessels of wrath and *all* hide the vessels of mercy. And the wrath reveals the mercy in glory. Some people think that's a heresy, but it's my favorite heresy, and it should be your favorite heresy. For God desires that none should perish. Do you?

Jesus ends by saying:

"The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend . . .

(and Peter Hiett has things that offend—sin)

. . . and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Years ago, my wife had a vision and a dream. I've told you once. In the dream, she saw a line of people descending a long staircase into a lake of fire. They all looked like zombies

except one woman who had life in her eyes. She kept saying, “I’m not supposed to be here.”

At the bottom of the staircase, this beast thing would throw each body into the fire. The zombies were consumed—annihilated. But the woman kept saying, “I’m not supposed to be here!” The beast threw her into the fire, but she was not consumed. She floated out of the demon’s reach, and as she did, the lake of fire turned to water like glass. It was a sea of glass mingled with fire (like Revelation 15). There were plants growing on the banks. Jesus was standing there. He helped the woman out saying, “Sweetheart, you were meant for here.” She stood by His side—the same woman—yet now she was pure gold shining forth like the sun in the kingdom of her Father.

From Scripture, I believe the fire is God, for “our God is a consuming fire,” “God is love,” and “our God is one.” One day we will be exposed to Him and He to us.

His presence destroys darkness and lies, for He is light and truth.

To vessels of wrath, He is perceived as wrath, which is fire.

To vessels of mercy, He is perceived as love: red hot, burning love.

His presence consumes the tares and purifies the wheat, refining us like gold.

You see, His kingdom will not fail. You need to know that. That Word will inhabit you like seed and bear fruit. The kingdom will not fail, and you cannot stop it.

It's not dependent on you.

In fact, in all these parables, there's only one place where we're commanded to *do* something, and the something is really nothing. But the nothing is very hard for us to do.

In the parable of the tares, the servants come to the master panicked because of the presence of the tares. They ask, "What shall we do?" And the master says, "Let"—"Let both grow until the time of the harvest."

You see, the Enemy is truly powerless against the seed. His only hope is to get the servants of the master to panic in fear, so that they pull up the tares and damage the wheat. The roots of the tares are entwined with the roots of the wheat.

So when my friend, contemplating the wheat and the tare, heard a voice which said, "Be afraid. Be very afraid," I believe it was a demon tempting her to do something in fear. But the master says, "Let." "Aphiemi" is the verb. It's also translated "suffer." "Suffer both to grow till harvest." More often, it's translated "forgive." "Forgive both to grow till harvest." It doesn't mean saying that a tare is good; it means trusting vengeance to God. He knows the tares, and He knows the wheat. *He* separates, *He* is judge, and you cannot be.

In Matthew 6, Jesus says to pray: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." The word is "aphiemi." On the cross, Jesus cries, "Father, forgive—aphiemi—let them. They know not what they do." And there God *let* them. And wrath was revealed as mercy. There all things were reconciled to Himself.

In Romans 9, Paul writes:

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory . . . ?

Even the vessels of wrath reveal God's glory in the vessels of mercy.

Well, I just said far, far more than I can comprehend. But this much seems clear: Wherever the kingdom comes in this world, wherever there is wheat, Satan will also sow tares. So . . .

- if there's charismatic wheat, he'll sow charismatic tares
- if there's conservative wheat, he'll sow conservative tares
- if there's liberal wheat, he'll sow liberal tares
- if there's Roman Catholic wheat, he'll sow Roman Catholic tares
- if there's Protestant wheat, he'll sow Protestant tares
- if there's wheat ready to bear fruit in Iraq and in the Islamic world, he'll sow tares in the hope we'll see the tares and fear the tares and start uprooting the tares. He hopes you'll go on a crusade. Years ago the church did (in the Islamic world), and that part of the world still suffers.

If you're conservative, Satan tempts you to a moral crusade (like the Inquisition). It's not that there aren't tares; it's just that uprooting the tares, you'll damage the wheat.

If you're a liberal, Satan tempts you to a social crusade (like Communism). It's not that there aren't tares; it's just that uprooting the tares, you'll damage the wheat. But the master says *let . . . suffer . . . forgive*.

Do you see? Satan has no direct power against the kingdom. He can't stop it. No power but lies. So he lies to make the servants of the Master anxious, so you'll *do* something out of doubtful fear.

- So you'll try to be your own savior and try to preach the Gospel out of fear rather than love, thinking that everybody's salvation is dependent on you, and *your* salvation is dependent on you.
- So you'll try to build the kingdom with your own strength.
- So you'll trust your own works rather than God's works.
- So you'll die by the law rather than live by grace.
- So you'll walk in the old covenant rather than the new covenant.
- So you'll panic and try to make the kingdom your visible project and try to build the kingdom into your big deal and try to cleanse the kingdom of all evil only to uproot your own heart in the process.

Satan will try to get you to do things in fear rather than abide in love. Jesus said, "Abide in me that you may bear much fruit."

What is the job of the wheat?
Simply to abide, abiding to bear fruit.

Years ago, Mother Teresa went to Washington DC. But she didn't go to Congress, which we consider to be a big deal. She didn't go the White House, which would have been very visible. She went to the slums—Anacostia, a section of Washington reeking with evil: drugs, abortion, gangs, and crime. But she didn't go to uproot the tares with legislation or presidential policy.

As she mingled among the people, a jaded reporter called out, “Mother Teresa, what do you hope to accomplish here?” She smiled, her eyes sparkled, and she replied, “The joy of loving and being loved.”

It was the presence of the kingdom.

That’s how the kingdom comes. And she knew she didn’t accomplish it. She had only to abide, to remain, to believe, and then she’d bear fruit in the presence of evil. The fruit is the seed, and the seed grows and cannot be stopped.

In the presence of great evil (on the night He was betrayed), at the Passover meal Jesus, the Promised Seed, revealed the secret hidden from the foundation of the world. He took bread, blessed it, and broke it saying, “Take and eat. This is my body.” And having given thanks, He took the cup saying, “This is the blood of the covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness (aphesis) of sins. Drink of it, all of you.”

This is the seed that was planted from the foundation of the world. This is the harvest of the earth. It cannot be stopped, and you can’t mess it up. Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”

He may build His church on you, Peter. He may build his church with you, men and women, but *He* will build it. He has no other plan, for there can never be another plan. God “accomplishes all things according to the counsel of His will” from the foundation of the world. *His plan*. So come to His table in faith, and you’re it!—the kingdom that cannot fail.

In Jesus’ name, believe the Gospel. Amen.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us. For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1:3-10)

Some people say, “Then why should we preach the Gospel?” Well, what else is there to preach? What else is there to talk about? Only hell. So preach the Gospel, because it spills out of you and because you can’t help saying, “Is He awesome, or what!” That’s preaching the Gospel.

So in the name of Jesus, may you believe the Gospel and speak the Gospel. Amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

He said to them, “An enemy has done this.” The servants said to him, “Do you want us then to go and gather them up?” But he said, “No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let [aphiemi] both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Matthew 13:28-30

“And forgive [aphiemi] us our debts, as we forgive [aphiemi] our debtors.”

Matthew 6:12

Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive [aphiemi] them, for they do not know what they do.”

Luke 23:34a

The only result of a truly dedicated campaign to get rid of evil will be the abolition of literally everybody. Indeed, that puts the finger on the whole purpose of the enemy’s sowing of the weeds. He has no power against goodness in and of itself: the wheat is in the field, the kingdom is in the world, and there is not a thing he can do about any of it. Evil, like darnel, is a counterfeit of reality, not reality itself. It is a parasite on being, not being itself. . . . Unable to take positive action anyway – having no real power to muck up the operation – he simply sprinkles around a generous helping of darkness and waits for the children of light to get flustered enough to do the job for him.

Robert Capon, Kingdom, Grace, Judgment

The church cannot be without evil people. Those fanatics who don't want to tolerate any weeds end up with no wheat either.

Martin Luther

Those who crusade not *for* God in themselves, but *against* the devil in others, never succeed in making the world better, but leave it either as it was, or sometimes even perceptibly worse than it was, before the crusade began.

Aldous Huxley

Therefore

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

If he is thirsty, give him a drink;

For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”

Romans 12:20

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 13:34-35

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,

according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

Ephesians 1:3-10

He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

I Peter 1:20

. . . the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:8b

“The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.”

Matthew 13:38

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? . . . But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” That is,

those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. . . . What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Romans 8:28-31; 9:6-8, 14-24

(For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's

disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:17-19

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, "To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!" . . . And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

Revelation 5:13, 21:5a

And after this I saw God in an instant, that is in my understanding, and in seeing this I saw that he is in everything. I looked attentively, knowing and recognizing in this vision that he does all that is done. I marvelled at this sight with quiet awe, and I thought, 'What is sin?' For I saw truly that God does everything, no matter how small. And nothing happens by accident or luck, but by the eternal providence of God's wisdom. Therefore I was obliged to accept that everything which is done is well done, and I was sure that God never sins. Therefore it seemed to me that sin is nothing, for in all this vision no sin appeared. So I marvelled no longer about this but looked at our Lord to see what he would show me; and at another time God showed me what sin is, in its naked essence, as I shall recount later. . . . Ah, wretched sin! What are you? You are nothing. For I saw that God is all things: I saw nothing of you. And when I saw that God has made all things, I saw nothing of you; and when I saw that God is in all things, I saw nothing of you; and when I saw that God does all things that are done, greater and lesser, I saw nothing of you. And when I saw our Lord Jesu sitting so gloriously in our souls, and loving and liking and ruling and guiding all that he has made, I saw nothing of you. And so I am certain that you are

nothing; and all those who love you, and like you, and follow you, and choose you at the end, I am certain that they shall be brought to nothing with you, and endlessly overthrown. God protect us all from you. Amen, for the love of God. . . . And in the great and endless love which God has for all mankind, he makes no distinction in love between the blessed soul of Christ and the least soul that will be saved And I saw no difference between God and our essential being, it seemed to me all God, and yet my understanding took it that our essential being is in God: that is to say that God is God, and our essential being is a creation within God; for the almighty truth of the Trinity is our father, he who made us and keeps us within him; and the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our mother, in whom we are all enclosed; and the great goodness of the Trinity is our lord and in him we are enclosed and he in us. . . . So I understood that all his blessed children who come from him by nature shall be bought back into him by grace.

Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love

© 2004 Peter Hiatt

Lookout Mountain Community Church

534 Commons Drive, Golden CO 80401

Phone: 303-526-9287 Fax: 303-526-9361

E-mail: info@lomcc.org