

# Life Group Questions

November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**An End to Treasure** – Pastor Ray Harms-Wiebe – [Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50](#)

To the Life Group leader: thank you for your ministry leading this Life Group. **Take time to review the questions, selecting those you believe will be most helpful for your group study.** You will not have time to use all the questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you lead, as you select questions, and as you guide the discussion.

## Reconnect

Come together with these preliminary questions:

- How has God gifted you to serve Him?
- How will you serve Him this fall at Willingdon Church?
- Where has God placed you in the city? What is your role there?

## Open in Prayer

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the text, the questions, and each other.

## Message Recap Questions

**Review the message using these questions**

1. What stood out to you most in this week's message?
2. What was the most meaningful thing you heard in the message? Why?
3. What questions are still lingering?

## Questions

1. In Pastor Ray's sermon, it was mentioned that Jesus was 'serving' parables, like enjoying a meal – How have you been enjoying the 'meals' that Jesus has been serving you? What have you enjoyed most about these 'meals'?
2. In the Parable of the Weeds, what problem did the man have (Matthew 13:24-26)?
3. Why is it important that the man plant 'good' seed?
4. When did the servants realize that there were weeds?
5. What questions did the servants ask the owner, and what answers did he give (Matthew 13:27-30)? What reason did he give for allowing the weeds and wheat to remain till the harvest?

6. What is represented by the following aspects of the parable of the weeds (Matthew 13:36-39)?
  - Owner:
  - Field:
  - Good seed:
  - Weeds:
  - Enemy:
  - Harvest:
  - Reapers:
7. Is Jesus still sowing good seed today? Why?
8. What lesson did Jesus use the parable to teach (Matthew 13:40-43)? What will happen to the weeds and to those who are righteous?
9. What can we learn from the teachings of Jesus about the eternal destiny of the wicked? (List other passages about the destiny of the wicked).
10. Pastor Ray encouraged us to live with the end in mind – How can we encourage each other to do this?

## Choose Your Next Step

**What next step will you commit to for the upcoming week (and beyond)?**

## Closing Prayer

A closing prayer is an effective way to point people back to our Loving Father as they seek to apply their new learnings throughout the week. Ask group members to share what they sense God calling them to. Pray for each other and commit to continue to do so during the week as people step out in obedience to God's leading.

# Commentary

This parable is found only in Matthew, who has it as the first of a series of parables specifically said to refer to the kingdom of heaven. It has a strong eschatological emphasis, even though it says important things about the admixture of those who belong to the kingdom and those who do not in the time before the end. It is a story that people who lived close to the land could well appreciate.

1. In Pastor Ray's sermon, it was mentioned that Jesus was 'serving' parables, like enjoying a meal – How have you been enjoying the 'meals' that Jesus has been serving you? What have you enjoyed most about these 'meals'?
2. In the Parable of the Weeds, what problem did the man have (Matthew 13:24-26)?
3. Why is it important that the man plant 'good' seed?

Jesus *put another parable before them*. *Them* will mean the people generally, not the disciples (Matthew 13:34 and 36). For *the kingdom of heaven*; it is a major thrust of Jesus' teaching as recorded in this Gospel. And it is a theme that recurs throughout the rest of this chapter. It was important that Jesus' followers should have a good grasp of teaching on this subject. Jesus likens the kingdom to a man sowing his crop. Jesus specifies that he sowed *good seed*, his word for *good* being that used for the *good* ground in the preceding parable; it indicates careful choice of the right seed for his purpose. Matthew is fond of referring to fields, and he has the word *field* more than anyone else in the New Testament (16 times).

4. When did the servants realize that there were weeds?

Nothing the intruder had done was obvious until the grain began to grow. When the ears of wheat began to appear and the plants *produced a crop*, literally "made fruit," it became obvious that some of the plants were not wheat. Before that the weeds appeared as wheat.

5. What questions did the servants ask the owner, and what answers did he give (Matthew 13:27-30)? What reason did he give for allowing the weeds and wheat to remain till the harvest?

The householder rejects the argument of his slaves with a firm "No." He gives a reason. It would be difficult to pull out the weeds without rooting up some of the wheat with them.

The householder had a better idea: "Leave them alone." They can grow side by side without detriment to the wheat right up to harvest-time. Then he will issue an instruction to the reapers that Jesus cites as it will be given. When the crop is reaped, the first thing that is to be done is to take the weeds out and burn them. The owner gives priority to getting rid of the weeds; he perhaps reasons that it will not matter greatly if a little of the wheat is pulled up with them at that time, for it could be separated off with little difficulty. The weeds are then to be tied in bundles and burned. *The wheat* has some emphasis from its position; it is the wheat that is important, and the wheat will be gathered into the barn.

6. What is represented by the following aspects of the parable of the weeds (Matthew 13:36-39)?

- Owner:
- Field:
- Good seed:
- Weeds:
- Enemy:
- Harvest:
- Reapers:

7. Is Jesus still sowing good seed today? Why?

Matthew has his common formula for a reply (“having answered he said”), and he reports Jesus’ explanation. His series of *ands* links statements that explain the features of the parable in detail. He begins with the man who sows the good seed, who is *the Son of man*; the seed is *good* (Matthew 13:24). If the present tense is significant, it may be meant to indicate that the sowing goes on; Jesus is not speaking of a once-for-all piece of sowing, but indicates that he is continually active in his field.

8. What lesson did Jesus use the parable to teach (Matthew 13:40-43)? What will happen to the weeds and to those who are righteous?

At that time *the righteous will shine*. Here *the righteous* are those accepted as righteous on the last great day; the term points to their acceptability, not to their meritorious achievement. *Shine* represents a verb found here only in the New Testament; the comparison to the sun brings out the radiance of the life to which they have come (Daniel 12:3). For *kingdom*; it is mostly in this Gospel the kingdom of heaven, with now and then the kingdom of God, but this appears to be the only place where God’s fatherhood is linked with the kingdom. It perhaps brings out the thought that the one who will rule us through eternity is a father to us. The kingdom is not harsh authority but fatherly love. For *He that has ears*. It is an injunction to the listener to understand what he hears.

9. What can we learn from the teachings of Jesus about the eternal destiny of the wicked? (List other passages about the destiny of the wicked).

For *the Son of man*; at the end of the age he will have the supreme place. Some emphasis is put on *send* by placing it first in the sentence; Jesus is not referring to some function that the angels will naturally perform, but one that they will carry out only because it is he who will send them to do it. They will gather (Matthew 13:28 and 30) the evil people out of the Son of man’s kingdom, an expression that indicates that in the end his kingdom will embrace all people, evil as well as good. There is no escaping his rule. The ultimate sovereignty is more usually ascribed to the Father, but it is clear that the Son is one with him in the final rule. The reaping process will include gathering *the things that cause sin* as well as the people who do lawless things. In the final state of affairs those traps will be taken away completely. Jesus speaks of people who do *lawlessness*, where the reference will be to the law of God. In this life there are people who overlook or defy the divine law, but that is not permanent: it lasts only for the here and now. The expression reminds us of the importance and the permanence of the divine law. For the thought of the whole parable (Zephaniah 1:3).

In words reminiscent of Daniel 3:6 Jesus speaks of the fate of the lawless ones. The angels will *cast them into the blazing furnace* (lit. “furnace of fire”), which fits in with other passages using the imagery of fire for the final destination of the wicked. In that place (*there*) there will be misery, symbolized

by the specification of *weeping and grinding of teeth*. This expression occurs 6 times in Matthew, once in Luke, and nowhere else in the New Testament. It leaves no doubt about the unhappiness of the final state of the lost.

10. Pastor Ray encouraged us to live with the end in mind – How can we encourage each other to do this?