

Title: Weeds in the Garden

Theme: The parable of the weeds


Object: Hoe

Scripture: "As the weeds are pulled up 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 weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil." (Matthew 13:40-41 NIV)

-S- I have weeds in my garden. I made sure that I planted my garden in good soil, and yet, I still have weeds. As you probably know, one of the biggest enemies of a good garden is weeds. Weeds will rob the soil of the nutrients that help the good plants to grow and many times they will choke out good plants. What can you do? **-S-** Well, you could take a hoe and chop down the weeds, but if you do that, you will probably chop down some of the good plants by accident.

-S- Another way to get rid of the weeds is to buy some weed killer. This stuff will really kill the weeds. The biggest problem with weed killer is that it doesn't know a tumbleweed from a tomato plant. It kills every plant that it touches. Sometimes, it is best just to leave the weeds alone until it is time to harvest the crop. Then you can separate the weeds from the good plants.

-S- One time Jesus told a story that compared his church to a garden that was infested with weeds. **-S-** Sometimes there may be people in the church that don't really belong. They do things that aren't very loving and they don't seem to believe what the Bible teaches. They sometimes say hateful things about the other members of the church and try to hurt them. They are like weeds in a garden.

We have to be very careful about trying to remove those people from the church. In his story, Jesus said that we shouldn't worry about pulling up the weeds that grow around us. If we do, we may do more harm than good.  He suggests that we leave the weeds for God to take care of - and concentrate on doing what He wants us to do - which is producing good fruit.

Whenever you see someone in the church that you don't think should be there, before you grab your hoe or your weed killer, remember the advice of Jesus. Just leave it up to God to separate the weeds from the good plants. If we try to take matters into our own hands, we will probably do more harm than good. What we should do is be kind and show our love for Jesus.

Dear Father, help us to love one another and leave the matter of judgment in your hands. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

PRAYER

Last week we examined the scripture to see whom a person serves – God or Satan. As we continue in the Gospel According to John this morning we will observe that for these Pharisees whom Jesus is confronting it continues to become even more evident where their hearts are and whom they serve. For every story, with the exception of God Himself, there is a beginning. If we go to Ezekiel we see the beginning of what Jesus is dealing with in our passage in John. God created Lucifer with great beauty, **-S-** “(Lucifer) You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I (God) placed you *there*. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.” (Ezekiel 28:14-15) Isaiah wrote of Lucifer, the star that fell, **-S-** “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! **-S-** But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’” (Isaiah 14:12-14) Jesus even commented about Satan’s fall to His disciples saying, **-S-** “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” (Luke 10:18) So, ever since his rebellion and fall, Satan has waged war against God and His servants. Satan’s war against God began in the angelic realm, **-S-** “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”

(Ephesians 6:12) Satan's war against God then came to earth and when he tempted Adam and Eve and since this time Satan has done everything in his power, to wage war against God and mankind. Satan's power is extensive here on earth, but limited by God. God allows Satan to have power here on earth so that he will fulfill God's mighty plan for the salvation of mankind. God's victory is absolutely certain; but God in His wisdom has chosen to allow Satan sway over much of mankind for a period of time. So the war rages on and will continue to rage on until the return of our Lord Jesus as we will see this morning. **-B-**

The Gospels are filled with confrontations between Christ and Satan's forces, both demonic and human. This morning we are focused on the human agents of Satan, primarily the self-righteous teachers and leaders of Israel. It is these hypocritical leaders that often received Jesus' harshest confrontations. These men came from an order of priests who once had a deep relationship with God, but over time, their ambition, like that of Satan, has made them apostate and hypocrites and they have moved from servants of God to enemies of God. My dear beloved, nothing has changed in the two thousand years since Christ – Satan works hard and has often succeeded in moving churches and those who call themselves Christian from being self-proclaimed servants of Christ to servants of Satan. This happens when Satan usurps a person's rightful love due Christ with false Christs, and the desires of the world.

When the scribes and Pharisees insisted that Jesus perform a sign for them in the Gospel According to Matthew, Jesus answered, **-S-** "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet." (Matthew 12:39) Can anyone tell me what this sign of Jonah was? Right, Jesus would be killed and lie in the grave for three days and He would

then rise from the dead, conquering death, and demonstrating that He is the living God that indwells and lives in the souls of His children. God is a God light and truth, however, the Pharisees had warped standards, just like Satan has corrupted what mankind thinks if true, right and acceptable – **S**¹⁹ “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21) The world sees little wrong with these behaviors. This has been evidence of man’s fallen and harden hearts since Adam and Eve and we do not have to look far to see these behaviors in our own time and society.

Our passage of scripture we are studying this morning marks the culmination of the exchange between Jesus and the Jewish leaders that had begun back in verse 12, **S** “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” As this exchange and discussion continued the Jewish leaders became increasingly agitated and they turned to abusive behavior in responding to Jesus. Last week we saw as Jesus pushed these leaders in an attempt to get them to recognize their need for God and the Messiah, Jesus finally reached the point where He made it plain and clear to these men, **S** “You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44) Now as the dialog between Jesus and these Jewish leaders draws to a close we will explore these

remaining verses in four ways: **-S-** Dishonor in verses 48 to 51, **-S-** Doubting in verses 52 to 58, **-S-** Defiance in the first half of verse 59 and **-S-** Disappearance in the second half of verse 59.

-S- DISHONOR

Outraged that Jesus had called them children of Satan in public these leaders angrily reply to Jesus, **-S-** “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” (John 8:48) When people are backed into a corner and caught doing something wrong they often lash out with statements that do not make sense but show their anger. Remember in Matthew the Pharisees said, **-S-** “This man (Jesus) casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.” (Matthew 12:24) That statement made no sense and was illogical, just as the insult they now hurl at Jesus makes no sense and defies logic. However, what Jesus says concerning these Pharisees proves to be true. **-B-** These Pharisees called Jesus a Samaritan because the Jews claimed to be the only true children of Abraham and the Samaritans were half-breeds. They were descendants of the Jews who stayed in the northern kingdom and intermarried with Assyrians. Calling a Jew a Samaritan was one of the most cutting insults one Jew could inflict upon another Jew.

Let me give just a brief history for the hatred of Jews towards the Samaritans. Not only were the Samaritans half-breeds, but also when the Samaritans offered to help rebuild the temple after the exile the Jews refused their help and both sides were insulted. After this a bitter rivalry grew over the next one hundred plus years. The Samaritans built their own temple. Most Jews refused to travel through Samaria. Samaritans responded with denying hospitality and charged

Jews traveling through Samaria higher prices for food and shelter than normal. However, Jesus showed He was not a respecter of this racial superiority when He talked with the Samaritan woman at the well.

The Pharisees, in effect, by calling Jesus a Samaritan, were calling Him a false teacher, a half-breed unworthy of the God of Israel and a traitor to His own people and faith. They were saying, Jesus was in fact an enemy of God, not a teacher or a prophet and certainly not the Messiah, and therefore, He should not be listened to.

However, they do not stop here and continued by claiming Jesus is demon possessed as well as a Samaritan. This is the same thing the Pharisees said about John the Baptist. Jesus was speaking to the crowds that followed Him saying of John the Baptist, **-S-** “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they (the Pharisees) say, ‘He has a demon!’” (Matthew 11:18) The Pharisees had a habit of attacking their enemies as being those possessed by demons. And, as mentioned earlier this is not the first time Pharisees accused Jesus of being demon possessed. So they are now claiming Jesus is mentally insane and He should not be taken seriously.

Jesus, unlike these men, stays calm and simply says, **-S-** “I do not have a demon.” Jesus says the truth is the opposite of what the Pharisees claim because **-S-** “I honor My Father.” So Jesus could not be demon possessed because someone who is demon possessed would be unable to honor God as Jesus did. Further, by the Jewish leaders behavior they showed dishonor toward Jesus and by doing so they dishonored the very God they claimed as their own. This statement echoes what Jesus had already told them in verse 42, **-S-** “If God were your Father, you

would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.” As scripture clearly teaches only those who honor Jesus the Son, who comes from the Father - only these will God the Father honor in return.

Jesus continues saying, **-S-** “But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.” (John 8:50) Even though Jesus did not seek His own glory, God the Father sought honor for the Son. God the Father twice; first, at Jesus’ baptism and again at His transfiguration said of Jesus the Son, **-S-** “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5) God the Father was saying to all – if they listen to, believe in and obey Christ, God promises what Jesus now says will be true, **-S-** “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” (John 8:51) “Truly, truly” is the translation of the Hebrew **-S-** “Amen, Amen.” By saying, “Amen, Amen” the people acknowledged that something was valid, true and from God. If someone keeps the Word of Jesus then they belong to Him and by keeping the Word of God it shows ones love and honor for God. But, still because of the hard hearts of these men, these Pharisees, who we observe, in truth, serve the prince of this world and not God, they continue with doubt and attack God’s Son.

-S- DOUBTING

Thinking only in the mortal sense these Jewish leaders respond to Jesus, **-S-** “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’” (John 8:52) Neither Abraham, who was revered by the Jews as the father of Israel and a man who was faithful to God nor any of the prophets of the Old Testament, which there had not

been a prophet for over 400 years – none of these had the power to defeat death and this is evidenced by the fact that they were all dead. The Pharisees are telling Jesus that He is certainly not as great as Abraham or the prophets and only an insane demon possessed man would claim such a crazy thing.

Again with great patience Jesus says, **-S-** “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.” (John 8:54-55) Jesus sought no glory for Himself, but was secure in the divine knowledge that His Father, the most holy and high God gives glory to His Son. These Jewish leaders claims were made on a basis of not knowing God. If they had known God, they would have recognized that Jesus was the Messiah sent to Israel by God. Jesus continues, so that the Pharisees would understand His eternal nature, saying, **-S-** “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.” (John 8:56)

Remember last week we saw that in **-S-** Genesis chapter 18 the story of the three supernatural beings that appeared to Abraham before the destruction of Sodom and they foretell to Abraham and Sarah the birth of Isaac. One of those beings was addressed as **-S-** LORD by Abraham or in Hebrew יהוה (*yhwh*) **Yahweh**, which is the proper name of the God of Israel. Two are most likely angels, but I know One is God by how Abraham addresses Him. This could be the pre-incarnate Jesus meeting with Abraham and evidence that Abraham indeed rejoiced with Christ and looked forward to His coming.

These Jews just do not get it, they cannot understand Jesus is the Messiah – they persist in their suborn unbelief saying, **-S-** “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” (John 8:57) Abraham had been dead for two thousand

years and Jesus had not yet reached the age of being an elder let alone being old enough to have seen Abraham. Again, in their thinking only a demon possessed and insane person would make such a claim. But, as Paul Harvey use to say, “Here is the rest of the story.” Jesus now drops the preverbal bombshell saying, **S-** “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” (John 8:58) Once again Jesus takes for Himself the sacred name reserved for God - “I am.” This clearly identifies Him as the Messiah and having deity with God the Father. Professor Homer Kent, who from 1949 to 1999 taught at Grace Theological Seminary, made this comment concerning Jesus’ use of “I am” here in verse 58, **-S-** “By using the timeless ‘I am’ rather than ‘I was,’ Jesus conveyed not only the idea of existence prior to Abraham, but timelessness – the very nature of God himself.” Still these men will not back down to the living eternal God.

-S- DEFINANCE

These Jewish leaders understood Jesus’ claim of deity perfectly. Because their hearts belonged to Satan their hatred is flamed into violence, for Satan hates Jesus because He is the true Son of God. These Pharisees claim Jesus is blaspheming God because they themselves are blind to fact that they serve Satan. **-S-** “Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him (*Jesus*).” (John 8:59a) They think they are fulfilling what is written, **-S-** “The one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.” (Leviticus 24:16) John MacArthur said, **-S-** “How ironic that the Jewish religious leaders, seemly so passionate for God’s honor that they were ready to cast stones at a blasphemer, were, in fact, accusing God Himself of blaspheming God.” As we have observed many times in the scriptures God is in control not

men.

-S- DISAPPEARANCE

The Lord Jesus did not protest that these men had misunderstood Him, for clearly He was claiming to be God and they clearly understood. But since His hour for crucifixion, resurrection and glorification had not come Jesus could not allow Himself to be killed - so He supernaturally **-S-** “hid Himself and went out of the temple.” (John 8:59b) Luke also records Jesus also doing this, **-S-** “... passing through their midst, He went His way.” (Luke 4:30) Thus Jesus ends this meeting and confrontation as only God can do. As Jesus left He may have echoed in the ears of the Pharisees what He had told them earlier, **-S-** “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.” (John 8:24) This saying by Jesus is still true today – believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and live eternally or die in your sins. Amen and amen!