

# An Order of Worship for the Home

August 16, 2020

Metaphors for the Kingdom from Matthew 13, week 2

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*This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.*

*There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org) to give online.*

## Invocation

Reader 1: The kingdom is where the King reigns.  
Reader 2: He reigns in our hearts. The kingdom of heaven is here!  
Reader 1: We gather in the name of the King who is...  
Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit...  
Together: Amen.

## Psalm 67:1-7

<sup>1</sup> May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face to shine upon us, *Selah*  
<sup>2</sup> that your way may be known on earth,  
your saving power among all nations.  
<sup>3</sup> Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!  
  
<sup>4</sup> Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations upon earth. *Selah*  
<sup>5</sup> Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!  
  
<sup>6</sup> The earth has yielded its increase;  
God, our God, shall bless us.  
<sup>7</sup> God shall bless us;  
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

## Confession & Absolution

*Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.*

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)*

Christian Confessing: I have treasured the wrong things, and I have sought to build my own kingdom. I am sorry for this. God, you alone are my King. I humble myself before your rule, and I ask that you would allow me to serve in your kingdom. Forgive me for the sake of your Son, Jesus, and his suffering and death.

Christian Responding: Your King has heard your confession. You are loved and forgiven! He welcomes you home as his child. The faith on which your confession is founded is a gift from your God, and in this faith you are saved. As Jesus said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." (Matthew 13:16)

Together: Amen.

## Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

## 2 Peter 3:8-15

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

<sup>11</sup> Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup> waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! <sup>13</sup> But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. <sup>15</sup> And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him...

## Message and Gospel Reading (Matthew 13:1-23)

### Kinda Like... Weeds in the Wheatfield

Last week we started a new series – Kinda Like This – looking at the parables of Matthew 13. Did you know there are 8 parables in that one chapter?

In one way or another, all of these parables are about “the kingdom of heaven.” Don’t be misled by that phrase, these parables are not trying to teach us something about a place; the kingdom is not a location. In fact, a better translation might be “the reign of heaven.” The stories are about what the King’s rule looks like – both now and in the future... and it doesn’t look like what you might expect.

We saw the unexpected last week as we examined the Parable of the Sower. This week we have another farming story, and more to learn about the kingdom of heaven and the reign of our King.

*He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, <sup>25</sup> but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup> So when the plants came up and*

*bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. (Matthew 13:24-26)*

There is one field, but there are two “crops.” The owner of the field planted good seed. An enemy planted weeds on top of that. If the typical outline of a story calls for a character overcoming a problem, I think we found the problem in this story.

*27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. (Matthew 13:27-29)*

The servants first ask how this happened. The listener might begin to wonder if the story will be a mystery. Will the parable be about the master searching out what has taken place? No, this is not a mystery. The master immediately knows what happened, and he states it plainly, “An enemy has done this.”

Next, the servants have an idea. They offer to help with a solution. Maybe the story will center on their extra effort on behalf of the master. Will the parable be about working hard to make the kingdom fruitful? No, we find out quickly that’s not the case either.

I hope we’re noticing what this story is *not*. This is not about discerning who the enemy is. Nor does the story highlight the efforts of the servants. We’ll have to keep reading to find out what this parable intends to teach.

*30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”” (Matthew 13:30)*

That’s the story. That’s the parable. That’s what the kingdom of heaven is like. But, what does it mean? What does this tell us about the reign of the King?

Before we consider what it tells us today, we need to understand what it meant to the crowds then. Last week we looked at the two groups of listeners Matthew highlights throughout his gospel – the disciples and the crowds. The disciples and the crowds heard different things in the Parable of the Sower, and with today’s parable this is true again. So far, Jesus has told the parable to the crowd. Later he will offer an explanation to his disciples.

What would the crowd hear as Jesus tells the Parable of the Weeds? What would the crowd understand about the reign of God?

They would have heard something like this: The rule of the King will remain hidden. It's not easy to distinguish the good from the bad. Don't expect that to change soon. Good and evil will continue to live alongside one another. I know you want evil dealt with, and it will be... but not yet. In this way, the reign of God remains hidden for now.

You might wonder why the crowds would need to hear this. You might be scratching your head at the value of that message. I think Jesus knows that sometimes sharing the difficult truth is required to gain trust.

Think about it this way. When pandemic restrictions began affecting our lives last spring, did you hear some leaders telling people this would all blow over quickly? Those voices were present. Have they gained or lost credibility for sharing their rosy outlook? Five months into restrictions, those voices of ungrounded optimism are long forgotten.

Jesus avoids telling the crowds what they want to hear, because what they want is not what's coming (not yet, at least). Instead, he shares a story which highlights the difficult truth of God's reign for this time. The King is reigning. He has planted his seed, and it will continue to grow until the harvest. The separation and removal of evil will come, but not until the end.

The world around you appears messy, because it is. There is a mix of good and evil, and the two seem inseparable. For now, that's how things will be. But, this does not diminish the fact that the reign of the King has come to you. His reign for this moment simply looks different from what you expected. Yet, he is a just ruler and he will deal with evil. You'll have to wait for that.

This is what the crowds needed to hear. This is what the crowds were *able* to hear. Hopefully they heard it. Later, when Jesus is alone with his disciples, he explains this parable. He expects the disciples to hear something additional.

After Jesus had shared today's parable, he also shared two other parables. (We'll look at those next week.) Following his teaching of all these parables to the crowds, his disciples find time in private to ask what this parable means.

*Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."*

*<sup>37</sup> He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. (Matthew 13:36-39)*

Wow – Jesus rattles off 7 different points of comparison. You’d think it was a coded message and he just gave them the key to the cipher.

As we look at this parable (and others) let’s remind ourselves of one important rule of interpretation. *Scripture cannot contradict scripture*. In other words, if we think this parable (or any parable) has a meaning which would conflict with other parts of God’s word, we’ve got it wrong.

In this case, however, we don’t have to work to decode anything. Jesus goes on to tell us exactly what we can learn here. He speaks to his disciples, and gives them – and us – something new to see in this story.

*<sup>40</sup> Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matthew 13:40-43)*

The judgement at the end of the story should not come as a surprise. The destruction of evil through burning should have been expected. That shows up in the parable itself. Even the crowds heard that part. In the end, the King will deal with evil.

It’s the last sentence which is for the disciples. Jesus shares some additional hope with those to whom it applies.

The parable as told to the crowd simply says the wheat is taken to the barn. That doesn’t draw much attention. It wasn’t intended to mean much to the crowd. They needed something to answer questions about right now. They needed a dose of reality for navigating today. They needed to know the just King would deal with evil. That’s what Jesus supplies for the crowds.

For his disciples, Jesus wants to offer more. For his disciples, Jesus gives a greater hope. In due time evil will be dealt with, because the King is just. The crowds needed to know that. The disciples needed to know that too. Our King certainly is just, but the disciples need to know more than his justice alone.

On top of his justice, your King is loving. Your King is your loving heavenly Father. He will deal with evil in the end. He will also bring you home to live with him. In his presence you will shine! When evil is fully removed from your life, you will be glorious, because you bear the image of your Creator. That identity lies in the shadows of sin for now, but sin has an expiration date and the life you have in Christ does not.

The parable was actually preparing the crowds and the disciples for what was coming a short time later. Jesus was leading both groups to his cross. In the death of Christ, we see God dealing with evil. We see sin put to death. We see the work of our good King moving forward in this world. The reign of heaven has come!

However, this reveals the “now and not yet” reality of God’s justice. Right *now*, he has removed sin from your life and he has put to death evil in this world. The fullness of what that means is *not yet* realized by you and I.

Likewise, the resurrection of Jesus highlights the reality of the glorious resurrection and new life we share with him. We have this life *now*, and we live as reconciled children of God today. Still, the full reality of what this means is something *not yet* experienced by us.

Today, as you consider the parable of the weeds, you receive the message to the crowds and the disciples. With the crowds you receive this realistic outlook which acknowledges the reign of God has come, yet the troubles of sin are obviously present. With the crowds you know that God is just and will deal with evil at an appropriate time.

Plus, you get to listen with the disciples. With the disciples you receive hope which looks not only to a just King, but to a loving Father. With the disciples you know that your God loves you and intends that you will radiate with joy eternal.

Our God is both just and loving. In the death and resurrection of Jesus we see this is true. Some effects of this are hidden for now, but all will be fully revealed when Jesus comes again.

Come, Lord Jesus! Amen

## Offering Prayer

*If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.*

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.  
Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.  
Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.  
Reader 2: Receive our offerings.  
Together: Receive us as your own.

## Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

*Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## Blessing (Matthew 28:19-20)

Reader 1: The kingdom of God moves forward, and you move with it.  
Reader 2: So make disciples, baptize, and teach.  
Reader 1: Do this in the name of the King – the Father, Son and Spirit.  
Reader 2: And know that the King goes with you. Always!  
Together: Amen.

*As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org). We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.*

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