



Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus
Wheat, Tares, Mustard Seeds, and Leaven

Matthew 13:24-43

Lesson 6

Looks can be deceiving. This week we will look at three parables. In one, tares are mingled with the wheat and allowed to grow alongside. In the second and third parables, we see the power of something seemingly small and insignificant. Jesus ended this section with the words *he who has ears to hear, let him hear*. May we also see the significance of these parables, understanding the deceivers around us and the power of small things.

OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 13:24-43

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?

2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. As you mark key words, mark any personal pronouns or other words that refer to the key word which represents a Person (*God* and *Jesus*).

Key Words: *God, Jesus, tares, wheat, seed(s), leaven, field, fire*, and the phrases *the kingdom of heaven is like* and *he who has ears to hear, let him hear*

a. The contrasting word *but* is used six times. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one of the times and record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.

b. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, is used in Matthew 13:40. Mark it as a key word and record the conclusion stated.

3. List what the *kingdom of heaven is like* according to verses 24, 31, and 33.

CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What is your least favorite type of yard work? Why?
2. Why do people dislike weeds?
3. What small or seemingly insignificant possession is worth a great deal to you? Why?

THE WHEAT AND TARES: Read Matthew 13:24-30

1. *The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field* (Matthew 13:24). What happened while he slept?
 - a. What are some ways the enemy can go undetected in:
our lives?

our church?
 - 1.) What is your responsibility to prevent this infiltration?
 - 2.) What do you believe is the responsibility of your church leaders to prevent this from happening?

2. Not only did the good *grain sprout*, but *the tares also appeared*. What did the *servants* say to the *owner*?
 - a. When was the enemy's plot discovered?
 - 1.) What does Matthew 7:17-19 teach us about this?
 - 2.) What *fruit* should we be looking for in our own lives and in the lives of others?
 - b. What was the *owner's* answer? Matthew 13:28
 - c. The *servants*, recognizing the danger of the *tares*, asked the owner a question. What did they ask?
 - 1.) What concerns might we have about *tares* growing amongst *wheat*?
 - d. The owner's answer was: *Let both grow together until the harvest*. What did he tell the servants he would *say to the reapers at the time of the harvest*?
 - 1.) What will happen to:
the tares

the wheat
3. According to this parable, who is to take care of the *tares*?
 - a. Notice the parable prior to the parable of the wheat and tares is the parable of the sower. Considering this, what is our responsibility?
 - 1.) How is this similar to Jesus' command in Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:19?

THE MUSTARD SEED: Read Matthew 13:31-32

1. Jesus continued to speak about *sowing*. What did the man *sow* in this parable?
 - a. How does the *mustard seed* compare to other seeds in size?

2. What is a *mustard seed* like when it is fully grown?
 - a. Refer back to the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-9. Notice the reference to *birds* in verse 4. What did the *birds* do?
 - 1.) Jesus identified the *birds* in Matthew 13:19 (see also Mark 4:15). Who do the *birds* represent?

3. To understand this parable, consider the parable of the *wheat and tares*. What are the similarities in these parables?
 - a. What additional message does Jesus have for us in telling us the potential of a small *seed*?

 - b. What do you think the message is regarding the *birds* that *come and nest in the branches* of the tree grown from the mustard seed?

4. When you think of the parable of the *mustard seed*, as it applies to your life, what do you tend to focus on – the *mustard seed* or the *birds*? Why?

THE LEAVEN: Read Matthew 13:33

1. To what does Jesus liken the *kingdom of heaven* in verse 33?
 - a. What do we learn about *leaven* from the following verses?
Luke 12:1

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Challenge: How does *leaven* (yeast) work?

2. The prior two parables mentioned *seeds*. This parable mentions the outcome of *seeds* by referring to *measures of meal*. What did the *woman* do?
3. Consider what *leaven* is like. How is it similar to a *mustard seed*?
4. What can *leaven* do to *measures of meal*?
 - a. What do you think was Jesus' concern?
 - b. What do you think He is warning us to do?

THE EXPLANATION:

1. Jesus often spoke to the *multitudes* in *parables*. What does Matthew 13:35b reveal about *parables*?
 - a. Jesus taught the people progressively. He moved them along step by step "as they were able to hear it". The point of the spiritual truth was not available to all, but the story itself was understandable to all. It could easily be recalled in the future for spiritual growth if the person was stirred to seek for the truth. How does this truth encourage you to expose yourself to as much of God's Word as possible?
2. When Jesus was alone with His disciples, He explained to them the *parable of the tares of the field*. Identify the following:

<i>He who sows the good seed:</i>	<i>the field:</i>
<i>good seeds:</i>	<i>tares:</i>
<i>the enemy who sowed the tares:</i>	<i>the harvest:</i>

 - a. What will happen at the *end of the age*:
 - to those who are the *tares*? verses 40-42
 - to those who are the *good seed*? verse 43
3. Using 1 John 3:10, contrast the *children of God* and the *children of the devil*.

4. Why do you think God plants His children in a field where He knows the *enemy* will plant counterfeit believers?

REVIEW: Read Matthew 13:24-43

1. Based on what you have learned about *tares*, describe the wisdom in the owner's solution.
 - a. Is the owner's solution contrary to what you might have done? How are you personally challenged by his solution?
2. The *tares* appeared to be healthy wheat until they matured. Then the servants recognized there was a problem. Describe a time when you allowed something that seemed harmless to become poisonous as it matured or grew.
3. In what ways can a Christian affect an unbeliever?
 - a. In what ways can an unbeliever affect a Christian?
4. Why is it important to avoid *leaven*, even when it is small?
5. How will you commit to becoming a stronger *wheat* plant; someone God uses to transform *sons of the wicked one* into *sons of the kingdom*?

*Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.
- Daniel 12:3*

Observation Worksheet

Matthew 13:24-43

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷So 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?' ²⁸He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' ²⁹But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let 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." ' ' ³¹Another 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, ³²which 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." ³³Another 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." ³⁴All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, ³⁵that 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." ³⁶Then 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." ³⁷He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. ³⁹The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹The 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, ⁴²and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!