

– Matthew 13.24-30 –
Children, Sacraments, and the People of God 3
Tares in the Lord's Wheat Field

Mat 13²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷ 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?' ²⁸ 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?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ 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." "' "

► **Recap** of sermons 1 and 2.

► _____ in the Lord's wheat field is a perennial problem among God's people. It's also described as:

- 1) Hypocrisy and nominalism in the church – nominal referring to those who are Christian in _____ only.

Mt 15⁷ "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ⁸ 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁹ And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "

- 2) Presumption in the Lord's covenant – presuming that simply being _____ the covenant entitles one to automatic salvation.

Mt 3⁹ "[D]o not ... say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' "

► The challenge is to _____ this problem biblically and _____ it biblically. There are two things we must know and three things we must do.

► **Two things we must know:**

► **1) We must know** and accept that there will be some tares in the Lord's wheat field, some nominalism in the Lord's church, and some presumption in the Lord's covenant until the second _____ of Christ (vs 30).

1Cor 15²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then comes the

end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Jn 5²⁸ "[T]he hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

- We believe Christ has promised the _____ of his church and kingdom in history, so that the great commission will be _____ and all nations will one day be disciple nations, which means that the great majority of their people will be Christians. But that does not mean every last _____ on the face of the earth will be a genuine Christian.

► **2) We must know** and accept that while God assures us of his sovereign _____ and _____, he does not give us access to the specifics of his eternal purposes so that we can infallibly _____ whom he has purposed to save and whom he hasn't. While everything is _____ from God's heavenly perspective, the same is not _____ of our human perspective on the ground in real time.

Mat 13.3³ "Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸ But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty ... ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Rom 8²⁸ [W]e know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Rom 11 ¹⁷ [S]ome of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree ... ²⁰ ... Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

► Three things we must do:

► **1) We must minister** in the church and in our families, not as though we have a “_____ code” into God’s eternal purposes, but according to what God actually _____ us, which is whether and to what extent those under our care are actively _____ to the word and bearing its fruit.

- Christ assures us that if we try to approach church or family as though we can infallibly _____ wheat from tares, we will make a _____ of things. Yet the church has a long _____ of doing just that.

- Our job as ministers and parents is to _____, _____, _____, and _____, while _____ out rocks and weeds.

► **2) We must use** _____, not _____, to cultivate faith, growth, and fruit.

- We would never minister to a nominal spouse by questioning whether they are truly _____. We would _____ them of the objective reality of the marriage, while calling them to cultivate the heartfelt love, commitment, and affection that go with it.

- We must do the same when ministering to church members and family members struggling with nominalism: We must

_____ them of their objective covenant union with Christ, while calling them to cultivate the heartfelt faith, commitment, and fruit that go with it.

1Cor 6 ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! ... ¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. ... ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

► **3) We must treat** all those in God’s wheat field as _____, unless they persistently claim to be _____ through clear and unrepentant sin.

1Cor 5 ¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you ... that a man has his father’s wife! ² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you ... ⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

- Even then, we excommunicate and put them out of God’s covenant people with the whole purpose of bringing them to _____, so we can welcome them back again.

2Cor 2 ⁶ This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, ⁷ so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. ⁸ Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.

► **Conclusion:** These two things we must know and three things we must do show us the biblical way of understanding and addressing the problem of tares in the Lord’s wheat field, nominalism in the Lord’s church, and presumption in the Lord’s covenant. These are a needed corrective to the church’s understanding and practice in recent centuries. If we follow them, we will be _____ for it, so will our children, and so will Christ’s church and kingdom.