

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
“Once Upon a Time”
Sermon date 9/28/2025

Ice breaker

- 1) Share a time when something good was growing in your life, but an unexpected challenge threatened it. What happened?
- 2) If your life were a garden, what kind of plant best represents you and why?

Unpack It

What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon and why? What was a takeaway or something that left you wondering about?

Looking Back

The parable of the wheat and the weeds (or tares) is one of several parables Jesus shares in Matthew 13 to explain the nature of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is teaching in Galilee, using stories familiar to a largely agrarian audience. Sowing seeds, harvesting, and dealing with weeds were part of everyday life, making the message both relatable and memorable. These parables were often meant to both reveal truth to those ready to hear and conceal it from those resistant. The image of an enemy sowing weeds was not just a metaphor but a real agricultural tactic in ancient times—Roman law even had penalties for sabotaging a neighbor's field this way.

When Jesus explains the parable privately to His disciples, He emphasizes the spiritual reality behind the everyday illustration. The "field" represents the world, the "good seed" the people of the kingdom, and the "weeds" the people of the evil one. The parable offers a long-view perspective: evil exists in the world alongside good, and judgment will come not immediately, but at the end of the age. This reflects a recurring theme in Matthew's Gospel—patience, discernment, and the certainty of God's final justice. It also would have reassured early Christians living among hostility and persecution, affirming that God sees all and will ultimately set things right.

Diving In

Read together: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Diving Deeper

- 1) What does the phrase "he had compassion" (v. 33) imply about the Samaritan's character?
- 2) What does the parable teach us about God's patience and timing, especially in dealing with evil?

- 3) What are some examples of “weeds” that can grow in our spiritual lives, and how can we guard against them without uprooting the good?
- 4) If you had to identify with one character in the parable—the sower, the enemy, the wheat, or the weeds—who would it be right now and why?
- 5) Where do you see both wheat and weeds growing in your life, and how is God inviting you to trust Him in the waiting?
- 6) Have you ever been tempted to “pull the weeds” too soon in a relationship or situation? What did you learn from that experience?
- 7) How does knowing that God will bring justice in His timing affect your peace and perseverance today?

Closing It Out

- 8) Suggested prayer time together to close out: Pray for peace, wisdom and discernment.

Take It Home

If you would like to press in a bit more this week, here is a prayer and reading guide for the week:

Day 1: Re-read the Parable

Read: Matthew 13:24–30

Reflect: What part of the parable do you most identify with today—sower, seed, field, or weed?

Respond: Journal a prayer asking God to help you grow strong in faith amid challenges.

Day 2: Hear the Explanation

Read: Matthew 13:36–43

Reflect: What does this passage teach you about God’s justice and mercy?

Respond: Write down one area of your life where you need to trust God’s timing more fully.

Day 3: Evil in the Midst of Good

Read: Psalm 73

Reflect: The psalmist struggles with the prosperity of the wicked. How does God respond?

Respond: Reflect on a time you questioned God’s justice—what did He teach you through it?

Day 4: Living with Discernment

Read: 2 Peter 3:8–14

Reflect: What does Peter say about God’s patience and our readiness for His return?

Respond: How can you live today in a way that prepares for the kingdom to come?

Day 5: Shine Like the Sun

Read: Philippians 2:12–16

Reflect: Paul says to “shine like stars in the world.” What does that look like in your context?

Respond: Choose one way to intentionally shine God's light in your workplace, school, or community today.