

## Wheat or Tares?

by Tricia Berg

*He put another parable before them, saying, "The **kingdom of heaven** may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his **enemy** came and **sowed tares** [weeds] **among the wheat** and went away. Matthew 13:24-25*

A similar idea to that conveyed in the above passage is expressed by John the Baptist in Matt. 3:12 and Luke 3:17, except with wheat and chaff. The full passage (quoted in part above) is below:

*He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 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?' 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?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. **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 13:24-30*

This passage has been used by some to excuse them from keeping the leaven out of the Church. (1Cor. 5:6-8) However, Jesus goes on to explain that in this parable, the field is the world (not the Church).

*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." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will **gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace.** In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. Matthew 13:36-43***

Jesus taught another parable with a similar meaning in the same chapter as the Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the Wheat and Tares.

*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and **gathered fish of every kind**. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and **sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad**. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and **separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace**. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 13:47-50*

We can't tell which people will accept the Gospel and so we shouldn't "count anyone out" when we reach out to the world with the Good News (and needless to say, the Crusades were from the pit of hell!) We bring the message and God saves. Once someone has accepted the message and become a believer, then our task of discipleship begins.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you**. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

It's good and even necessary to welcome people "as they are," but not to encourage them to STAY that way after becoming a new creation in Christ—as was to have happened if they have truly put their faith in Him. (2Cor. 5:17, 2Pet. 1:3-12, Rom. 6:1-4, 2Cor. 6:14-18, 1Cor. 15:33-34, 1Cor. 5:6-7, 13, Psa. 141:4, Psa. 10:3-4, Prov. 21:2)

Wheat and tares may look the same when they are immature, but the difference over time will become obvious. We are meant to begin practicing godliness by His power (which is given by the Holy Spirit in us) as soon as we have come to the knowledge of Him. This is the process of sanctifying (purifying, setting apart in holiness) those who have been justified (declared not guilty, made right with God) by the precious blood of Jesus. He does sanctify as well, but because we live in the sinful world, it is a process to remain clean. (John 13:1-17, John 15:3, Rev. 3:4, Jam. 1:27, 1John 1:5-10)

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with*

knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.** 2 Peter 1:3-10

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **training** us to **renounce** ungodliness and worldly passions, and to **live** self-controlled, upright, and godly lives **in the present age**, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Titus 2:11-15

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will **not gratify the desires of the flesh**. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. **I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And **those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** Galatians 5:16-24

A physical structure made by men is not the Church. (1Pet. 2:1-5, Rom. 12:1-2) Jesus called the Pharisees "white-washed tombs" for going through outward motions of faith, yet remaining filthy inside their hearts. (Matt. 23:25-28, Mark 7:14-23, Mark 7:6-9, Isa. 29:13) We are not called to fill up man-made buildings with TARES: people who **continue** in unbelief after hearing the Good News, or anyone who refuses to change (mature) but merely enjoys the company and rituals practiced by believers. Doing so will only end up corrupting those around them. It is for the protection of the rest of the crop that the tares must not be allowed to take root and, as weeds tend to do, take over. It is also important for weeds to know that they are weeds. People who think they have salvation by process of association with true believers, or for whatever other

unbiblical reason, are unprepared to meet their maker but they don't know it!. (1Cor. 5:4-5, Matt. 22:11-14)

When you pull up a weed, often a plant near it may come up with it because the roots are intertwined. God doesn't rip us out of the world. He CALLS us to separate from it and lets us CHOOSE who we love most. (Matt. 10:37-38, 1John 2:15-17) Those who "have an ear" listen to His prompting them through hearing the word and His Spirit within them to OBEY, out of LOVE. They willingly give up things (and people if necessary) that pull or push them away from God. John said that whoever still makes a practice of sinning after claiming to come to know Jesus is lying. (That is not the same thing as slipping, getting back up and making every effort to heed and walk with the Spirit. Heb. 12:1-2, Heb. 12:11-17, 1Cor. 9:24-27)

*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For **what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?** Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or **what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?** What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **we are the temple of the living God**; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and **be separate from them**, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:14-18*

*Everyone who makes a **practice** of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. **No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.** Whoever makes a **practice** of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning**, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. **By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.** 1 John 3:4-10*

*My little children, I am writing these things to you **so that you may not sin**. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for*

*the sins of the whole world. **And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*** 1 John 2:1-6

*Therefore, brothers, be all the more **diligent to confirm your calling and election**, for if you **practice these qualities** you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an **entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to **recall these things**.* 2 Peter 1:10-15 (Also see 2Pet. 1:3-10 above.)

The Church is a body of called-out (of the world and into Christ) believers. (John 15:18-19, Jam. 4:4-10, Gal. 3:27 - also see Rom. 6:3, Matt. 3:11, John 6:63) He called us to make disciples, which are followers, teaching them to OBEY His commands. (Matt. 28:19-20, John 8:31-36) His commands are not burdensome, because we love Him. (1John 5:3) He has removed the yoke of the letter of the law from us and placed His Spirit in us, giving us a new command. (Matt 11:28-30, Acts 15:10-11, 19-20, Rom. 7:6, Rom. 8:2, Eph. 2:8-10 - v. 10 is not to be ignored...our "works" include refraining from evil as well as doing good deeds from a pure heart. For context and relationship to Acts 15, read all of Eph. 2:1-22.)

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my **disciples**, if you have love for one another."* John 13:34-35

*Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may **belong** to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For **while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death**. But now we are released from the law, having **died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code**.* Romans 7:4-6

We are absolutely to forgive others when they sin against us, and our aim in the Church is to RESTORE the repentant sinner to fellowship. (Matt. 18:21-35, 2Cor. 2:6-11) However, the Church IS to judge believers for SIN (1Cor. 5:13, Matt. 7:5, Matt. 18:15-17), but without partiality and not by appearances (Matt. 22:16, John 7:24, 1Tim. 5:21, Jam. 2:1, 9), and is NOT to judge things that are matters of freedom—preferences about various things that are not sin (Rom. 14:1-23, Gal. 5:13, Col. 2:8-23) and in how to individually serve God (1Cor. 4:1-21, 1Cor. 12:1-31). We are also not to be hypocritical by picking at the little sins of others while ignoring our own bigger sins, or doing the same sins as we judge others for. (Matt. 7:1-29 - context is so important!, Rom. 2:1-24)

It seems like the answer in many churches today (especially the larger ones) is just to not deal with anyone's sins in favor of "mercy triumphs judgment" (Jam. 2:13 - but Jam. 2:12, the verse before it says that we will be judged by how we chose to use our freedom) and "love covers a multitude of sins" (1Pet. 4:8 - the verse before it says to be self-controlled and sober-minded), but then the whole lump gets leavened. (1Cor. 5:6-8)

Many falsely teach that God no longer "sees" our sin. (Proven false in Acts 5:1-11) Immature believers trust other believers who have been in the Church for a long time (who should have matured over time - 1Cor. 3:1-3), and look to them as examples. (Titus 2:1-10) If their version of "love" they are taught is to "never judge" anything, then "babes in Christ" may be misled into thinking that their sin is acceptable to God. (1Cor. 5:3-5, Eph. 5:6, 1John 3:7, Jam. 1:13-16) We were never told we had to choose between truth and love. (Eph. 4:15-16 - the chapter is about not being led astray, but growing up into Christ and leaving behind our old self and the ways of the unbelieving Gentiles.) (Rom. 13:13-14, Gal. 5:16, Rom. 12:9) The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of truth. (John 14:15-17)

The solution to this problem, I think, has always been that if we are truly saved, then the desire to please God will be placed inside of us by the Holy Spirit, and we'll "police" ourselves (with His help—He is the Helper, after all - John 14:15-24, and the help of other believers - Gal. 6:1-2, Heb. 10:24-25, Col. 3:16). (1Cor. 11:29-32, 2Cor. 13:5, Phil. 2:12-16, Eph. 4:17-32, Rom. 8:9—many believers love Rom. 8:1, 8:31-35, 8:37-39, but they like to skip over the rest, and often take the latter part of the chapter out of context—it's encouragement to withstand suffering caused by external sources, not reassurance that God is pleased with deliberate sin by believers.) Jesus said "go, and sin no more." (John 5:14, 8:10-11 - note this woman was an adulterer, not a prostitute; and the man should also have been brought into

judgment according to Lev. 20:10 and Deut. 22:22. It's a sign of those times that they were not doing as they were instructed to do.)

Sometimes believers say "God knows my heart" as a reason why they don't have to give up their sin in order for Him "to know they love Him." Jesus said the heart is wicked inside and what comes out of it defiles us. (Matt. 15:18-19) If we're not willing to struggle against sin (Heb. 12:4) and rely on Him and our love for Him to help us overcome (2Cor. 5:14-15, 1John 5:2-5, Matt. 26:41, 1Cor. 10:13), then we love our sin more than Him. (John 14:23-24) That's incredibly sad! Jesus willingly suffered HORRIFICALLY on our behalf. (Isa. 52:13-53:12, John 10:17-18, 2Cor. 5:21)

We're not even to love our family, let alone evil things that He hates, more than God. (Matt. 10:37-39, 1Thess. 5:22, 2Tim. 2:19-22) In the Old Testament, High Priest Aaron's sons defiled the temple by offering unauthorized fire and were destroyed by God for it. Aaron understood that God is righteous and accepted it. (Lev. 10:1-3) High Priest Eli's sons were also consigned to die for defiling the temple, and Eli along with them for not stopping them. (1Sam. 2:12-17, 22-25, 27-34, 1Sam. 3:10-18) In this age, WE are the temple and God has not changed such that He no longer minds it being defiled, even though no one has been struck dead for doing so. (1Cor. 6:9-20, 1Cor. 3:16-18, Heb. 3:5-6, Eph. 2:19-22) He is STILL holy and His expectations of and desires for us haven't changed, either. (Rev. 22:10-15)

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but **as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."** And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, **conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.** 1 Peter 1:14-19*

*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might **sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, **without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.** In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because **we are members of his body.** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one*

*flesh.” **This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.** However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Ephesians 5:25-33 (also 1Cor. 6:12-20)*

If we don't even have any desire to please God, then we don't need reassurance that all is well—we need to wake up! (1Cor. 15:33-34, 2Cor. 5:15, 1John 1:5-2:6, 1John 2:28-29, 1John 3:4-10, 1Thess. 5:5-11, Rev. 2:12-29, Rev. 3:1-6, Rev. 3:14-22) Holding up the mirror of God’s word is no more "unloving" than a smoke alarm sounding a warning (but we are gentle not harsh when correcting one another). (1Cor. 13:1-7, 2Tim. 2:25-26, Jam. 5:19-20, Matt. 5:1-16, 1Cor. 4:21, 2Cor. 10:1-7, Eph. 4:1-3, Phil. 4:5, Gal. 6:7-9, 1Tim. 6:11-12, Titus 3:1-11, Jam. 1:22-27, Jam. 3:17, 1Pet. 3:14-17, Col. 3:12-15 - surrounded by exhortations to live for Christ and to help each other to do so.) We’ve all heard the saying: “It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it.” That is true in the case of handling sin in the Church, but not to the extent that all sin is redefined as “not sin.”

*Brothers, if anyone is **caught in any transgression**, you who are spiritual should **restore** him in a spirit of **gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.** Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the **law of Christ.** Galatians 6:1-2*

The fruit of the Spirit is produced by Him, so if that fruit is absent, then that's not a good sign. (Gal. 5:22-26, Eph. 5:9-12, Phil. 1:9-11, Heb. 12:11, Jam. 3:18, John 3:3-8, Rom. 8:9) Instead of reassurance that they are "good" with God, professed believers who love their sins more than their LORD and Savior need to be jolted out of complacency so they can prepare for Jesus’ return by getting extra oil to top off the supply in their lamps that has dwindled while they were slumbering—NOW, so that they won’t be on the wrong side of the door when Jesus closes it. (Matt. 25:1-13, Matt. 24:46-51, Luke 21:34-36, Mark 4:18-19, Psa. 119:105, Rom. 10:17, Luke 13:22-30, Rev. 4:1, Rev. 3:7-8, Isa. 22:22)

We can't judge the hearts of others, but each believer should be encouraged to consult the Holy Spirit for a “status check” like King David did. (Psa. 139:23-24, John 2:24-25, Gen. 6:5, 1Cor. 4:4-5) Some will be saved "as through the fire" with no further reward (1Cor. 3:13-18), and some will be called least in the kingdom. (Matt. 5:19) Some will be denied entry. (Matt. 7:21-29, Luke 13:22-30, Matt. 25:1-13, Matt. 25:30, Heb. 12:14-17, Matt. 5:8, John 3:3-8, 2Cor. 7:1, Eph. 5:5, 1Thess. 4:2-8, Rev 21:27, Rev. 22:15)

So I agree 100% that pointing fingers and deluding ourselves into thinking we're perfect is wrong, but we're not authorized to give people permission to sin or make excuses for them as to why it's okay, etc. (1Pet. 2:16) That's not the same as forgiving someone who sins against us. (Matt. 18:21-35) It helps to remember that anyone (including ourselves) who doesn't receive discipline from the Lord is illegitimate. He told us not to try to escape it, but to view it as a good thing, because it IS for our good. (Heb. 12:3-13, Rom. 8:28, Rev. 3:19) These days, it seems like children receive less and less discipline and it shows, but thankfully, God doesn't change with the times or shirk His responsibilities.

People who think that they're being merciful by giving others a license to do things that God said not to do are NOT being loving. That is about as "loving" as letting kids play in the street, on the train tracks, on the edge of a cliff, in a tiger cage—you get the idea. I have to interject here that neither is it appropriate for anyone to try to persuade Christians to give up their freedom in Christ and revert to the Mosaic law with its ceremonial rituals, etc. (Col. 2:16-23, Gal. 4:8-5:16, Col. 2:18) And hatred of anyone (sin is not a person, it's an action), foul language, violence, etc. by the children of God does not glorify Him. (1Pet. 3:8-17, 1Pet. 2:11-16, 2Tim. 2:22-26)

Every Christian would do well to do their own in-depth study so they can realize the unimaginable privilege that God has granted us and what He expects from us. (1Cor. 9:23-27, Phil. 3:7-20, Eph. 5:1-21, 2Tim. 2:3-7, 1Tim. 4:7-9, Heb. 12:1-2, 2Tim. 3:12-17, 2Tim. 4:8, 1Pet. 1:6-21, 1Pet. 4:1-19, 1Pet. 5:6-11, 2Pet. 1:3-12, 3John 1:11, Rev. 2:10, Rev. 3:11) This is no small thing to be taken lightly. (Heb. 6:4-12, Heb. 10:26-39) The choices we make now have eternal consequences. We need to exercise self-control and learn from Esau's example NOT to put temporary, worldly things ahead of our inheritance. (Heb. 12:14-17, 28-29, Jam. 1:12, 1Cor. 6:9-20, Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:5-6, Rev. 21:8, Rev. 22:15) We need to value eternal things more than temporary ones. (Matt. 6:19-34)

*See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:25-29*

There are MANY warnings for us as believers throughout the Bible telling us that we must endure in order to receive the promised inheritance. (Rev. 2:1-3:22, 1Cor. 15:2, Phil. 2:14-16, Heb. 3:6, 3:14, Heb. 4:14, Heb. 6:18, Heb. 10:23) That promise was made to those who love God (1Cor. 2:9), which was defined as those who obey His commands. (Matt. 22:34-40, Matt. 7:12, Rom. 13:8-10, Jam. 1:25, Jam. 2:8, 12, 1Pet. 4:3-5, 1Thess. 4:3-8, John 13:34-35, John 15:8-14, 1John 3:16-18, 1John 3:23-24, 1John 4:7-12, 2John 1:5-6)

*You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. **Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:10-17*

*We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your **steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.** 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4*

*Only **let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. **For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake**, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. Philippians 1:27-30*

People who cave into the unenlightened demands of the world and blend in it are NOT persecuted, are they? (Matt. 5:10-16) Overcoming IS by His power, but He doesn't FORCE us to obey Him any more than He forced us to believe in Him. (Titus 2:11-15) We yield to His will out of love, gratitude and healthy

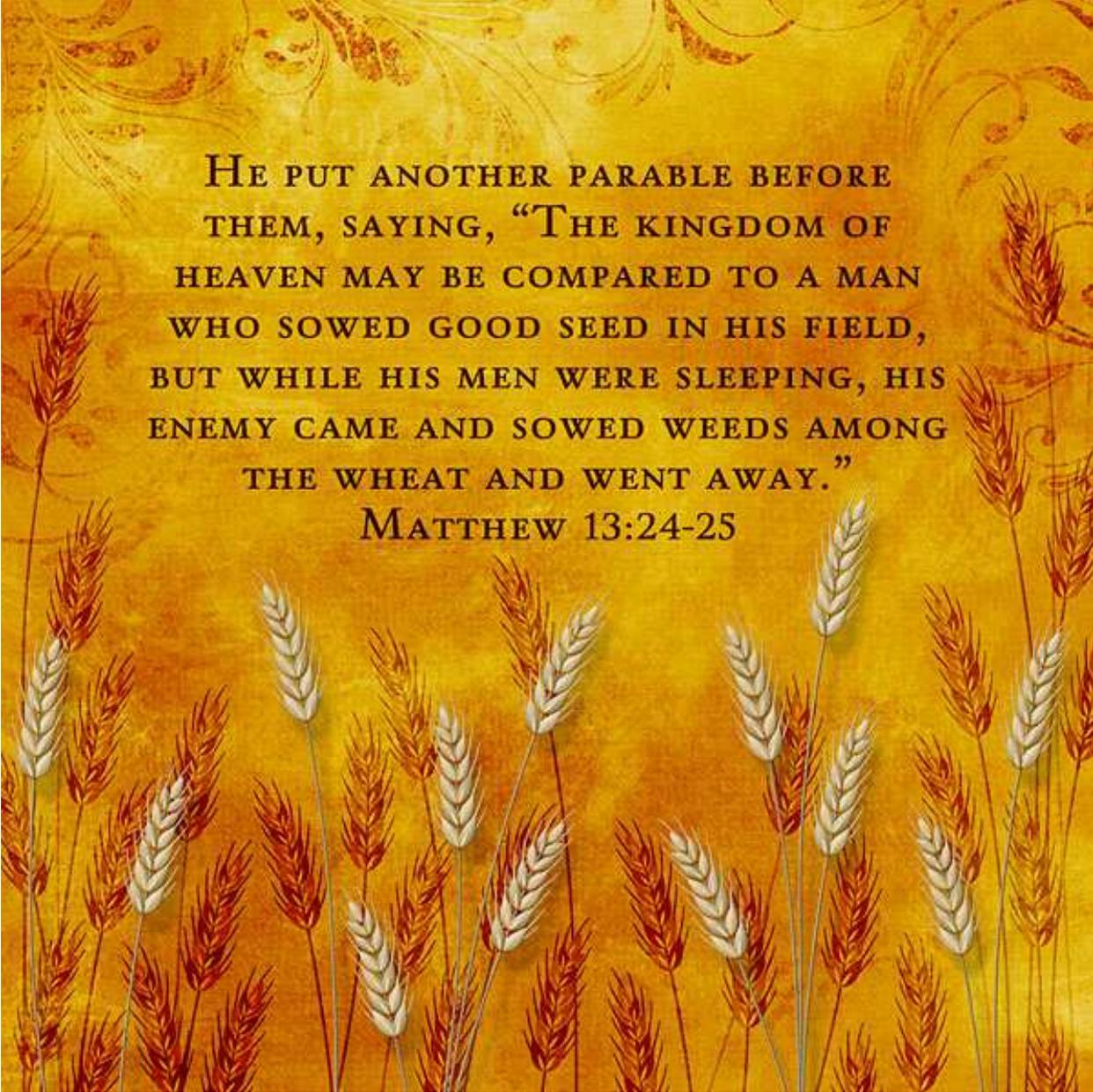
respect. (Psa. 111:10, Acts 2:36, Psa. 110:1-7, Heb. 1:1-14) He ALONE is worthy of ALL we could ever give of ourselves. So again, if we go beyond the text to add rules or to take them away, we are not doing anyone a favor. (1Cor. 4:6, 2John 1:6-11, Rev. 22:18-19)

This isn't about becoming perfect of our own power or condemning others when they slip, but of practicing a way of life more and more as we grow in Christ rather than practicing the things that we did out of ignorance before we were saved. (1Thess. 4:1-12, 1Pet. 1:14-19, Rom. 6:20-22, Eph 4:17-24) Let's be wise to good and innocent as to evil. Let's not listen to the TARES sown by the ENEMY (or the wolves in sheep's clothing) when it comes to how to please God. (Matt. 13:24-30, John 8:44, Heb. 13:1-18, 2Pet. 3:1-18, Jude 1:3-23, 2Pet 2:1-22, 2Tim. 3:1-9, Act 20:25-35, John 10:7-16, 1Tim. 6:20-21, 2Tim. 4:1-4)

*I appeal to you, brothers, to **watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.** For your **obedience** is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be **wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.** Romans 16:17-19*

***Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*** Philipians 3:17-19

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HE PUT ANOTHER PARABLE BEFORE  
THEM, SAYING, "THE KINGDOM OF  
HEAVEN MAY BE COMPARED TO A MAN  
WHO SOWED GOOD SEED IN HIS FIELD,  
BUT WHILE HIS MEN WERE SLEEPING, HIS  
ENEMY CAME AND SOWED WEEDS AMONG  
THE WHEAT AND WENT AWAY."

MATTHEW 13:24-25

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