Jesus Unfiltered - **WK 4 – Better or Worse**

**I am an optimist and a realist – positive and realistic…**

**Jesus spent 3 yrs teaching the Kingdom of God - the #1 way, a 1/3 of all His teachings – was Parables (comparisons)**

**Parables are meant to weed out the fans from the followers**

**It is about seeing the world and universe thru the eyes of an all sovereign Lord - who is ever ruling as King**

**Earlier that same day he had a run in with some Pharisees - video**

**Matthew 13 - Jesus has a run in with some arrogant religious people - which triggered 7 parables about the kingdom... the 1st was the..**

**1st parable - the parables of the sower – 4 soils**

**1 - hard hearted / 2 - shallow hearted / 3 - distracted / 4 - attentive**

**The parable reveals the harsh reality that, not everyone will understand and follow Jesus**

**Three parables... in one**

**Today's parables answer a debated question for centuries –**

**Is the world getting better or is it getting worse? What do you think?**

**It is important to remember that when Jesus says "the kingdom is like" He is referring to the big picture of the story**

**Parable of the Weeds**

**Matthew 13:24 Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. (an enemy trying to destroy the crop) 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. (darnel - a poisonous weed that looks just like wheat) 27 “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ 28 “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ (no weed killer – all would get pulled) 29 “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. (let them be - I'll sort it out) 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”**

**Jesus then gives 2 mini-parables - will take a look at in minute**

**34 Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. 35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.” (Jesus says this often - the purpose of Parables is to chase away the fan and draw the true followers - to clear the herd)**

**The Parable of the Weeds Explained**

**36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. (coffee break) His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” 37 He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. (that’s me - Jesus) 38 The field is the world, (that's you - everyone in the world) and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. (the wheat - are believers) The weeds (the darnel) are the people of the evil one, (look like believers, but are not) 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. (Satan) \*\* Cast of 5...**

1. **The kingdom is growing in the hearts of people in the earth**

**Good news - all around the world the HS is moving in hearts - people are understanding, turning to Jesus and are growing in kingdom truth.**

**You (if a Christian) are a product of the seed sown by Jesus**

**Colossians 1:6 - ...In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.**

**I love to visit churches in other parts of the world...**

**Jesus says - In this same field there is another sower - Satan - Matthew 13:26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 38 ...The weeds are the people of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. (the devil / Satan - He is real)**

1. **Evil will continue to grow in hearts of people in the earth**

**The enemy - is sowing evil and corruption in people - and they will grow in number just as the righteous grow in number.**

**Jesus people (believers) and Satan's people (false believers) are in this world together both getting stronger in this world**

**Matt 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest.**

**Debated question for centuries - Is the world getting better or worse?**

**Yes and no - conditions might be improving (avg life span, tech, discoveries, health care, conditions, the kingdom of God is expanding) but internally things are still growing evil (deprived, disconnected, disloyal, depressed, wandering hearts... we are a world in decay)**

**\*\* Jesus is describing a world in which Satan is active - today**

**Satan is actively at work trying to destroy the kingdom of God and you**

**1 Peter 5:** **8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

**Satan the Straw Man - Understand this about the enemy (clear up false)**

* + **Satan is real, but his power is limited**

**(Jude 8-10, Dan 10:12-14, 1 John 4:4 / Job 1-2 / 2 Cor 12:7-10 / Ro 8:37-39)**

**He is not a secondary force or able to anything God can do - he is a created being, a fallen angel - he is not omni- present, knowing, potent**

* + **God's power is absolute**

**(Gen 1:1, Rev 4:8-11, Is 55:8-9, 2 Pet 3:8-9, Ps 139, 66:7, Jer 10:12)**

**Satan will attempt to stop the kingdom but he can not nor will he ever**

**Jesus declared to the Disciples - that "The gates of hell will not prevail"**

* + **Satan's most powerful weapon has always been - the lie**

**(Genesis 3:1-6, 13-19, John 8:44, John 8:32, Ephesians 2:1-3, 2 Corinthians 4:4)**

**This parable also tells us this -**

1. **Difference between true and false believers isn’t always obvious**

**The wheat = God's people / the Weeds = Satan's people**

**Weeds (darnel) - look like wheat but never produce grain – the fruit of the stalk is a poison - What grows is poison to those who eat it.**

**Weeds, especially in the early stages of growth, resemble wheat. Likewise, a false believer may resemble a true believer.**

**Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ 23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’**

**What are you? Are you a weed - or wheat?**

**2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?**

**The kingdom will fully be established when Jesus returns until then... False teachers, pastors, Christian playa's, church goers - people who look like kingdom people but are not, will be among you.**

**Until... Jesus returns… Matthew 13:39b ...The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. 40 “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. (the righteous & evil side by side until the return of Jesus - evil & the effects of sin will not cease until He returns)**

1. **Evil and those who cause it will be dealt with... eventually**

**We are to live and give the kingdom to all who around us - serving - loving - fighting injustice - feeding - caring - for poor and hurting...**

**But we will not overcome evil in this world - but Jesus will at his return**

**Are we not supposed to weed them out? Matthew 13: 28 “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ 29 “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. (2 Peter 3:9)**

**This is not about avoiding discipline (Mt 18:15-17, 1 Co 5:1-13; 2 Th 3:6-15). We are clearly instructed to deal with the wolves and false teachers. The point is about those who have the appearance but not the Spirit.**

**Jesus continues - Matthew 13:41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. (return of Jesus) 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (eternal judgment) 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (two destiny's) Whoever has ears, let them hear.**

1. **Not everyone makes it into the kingdom**

**Jesus uses parables to constantly remind us of the great divide**

**This is why he came - to rescue us from our sin – to give life**

**Turn to your neighbor... are you going to be there?**

**Jesus is telling us how the enemy is at work to derail the Kingdom**

**He then gives two mini-parables (often debated over)**

**Neither are explained by Jesus... But each time it is followed with a rebuke of religious & corrupt church leaders**

**Parable of the Mustard Seed**

**Matthew 13:31 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”**

**The Seed - God's word / God's people / the kingdom (Mt 17:20 - Faith as a mustard seed) small humble beginnings - it will grows to provide food, rest, & shelter for believer & unbeliever (Ezekiel 17:23, Daniel 4:11-12)**

**The seed – is the kingdom has come unassuming - not as you thought it would - but it will be greater than you can imagine**

1. **Never underestimate what God can do**

**The kingdom of heaven came in a humble unassuming way - Jesus. The kingdom in the earth had small humble start - in the church**

**That small homeless group of men and women... walking the countryside thru the HS - became the Body of Christ = Church**

**Now the greatest force on the earth - started with 120 sold out to Jesus disciples - now at 2.1 billion - feeding, clothing, serving, caring for, fostering families - fighting injustice when no one else will...**

**But what about the birds? To the farmer the bird is not a friend. The presence of evil & corruption - (Matt 13:4, 13:19) as the kingdom grows their will be those who will try to nest and eat at it - to kill it.**

1. **The Enemy will keep trying - Be careful of the nesters**

**Growth of a church / ministry can bring corruption - A warning from Jesus - The kingdom will grow - but the enemy will try to infiltrate it.**

**Peter and Paul warn us of this continually - in the NT. Leaders who will lead you astray with false teaching and false gospel. These wolves will come and try to pick at and tear apart the work of God**

**To back this up Jesus gives a similar mini parable after this... The parable about leavened bread – The Yeast**

**To help us understand it - let me back up and give some background**

**The leaven process - kneading dough - leaven is a lump of old dough (bacteria filled) in a high state of fermentation, or a substance that causes dough to rise (yeast). It is used to make bread rise.**

* **In OT - leaven implied corruption and sin (fermentation). Bread offered to God (a type of Jesus) is unleavened. 71X always evil**
* **In NT - Jesus used leaven as symbol of corrupt (of Pharisees, Herod, Sadducees - Luke 12:1, Mark 8:14,15, Matt 6:6-12) b13X always evil**

**Every instance that leaven appears in the Bible, it represents evil**

**Parable of the Leaven -**

**Matthew 13:33 He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into (hid into) about sixty pounds of flour (bread for 100 people - not a small deal)**

**Listening with their ears on - the Jewish people present would recognize, that’s the exact amount for the grain offering in Lev 2 - that was to be without leaven - What! that is wrong. Adding the leaven would have been a picture of great corruption.**

**(then he adds) ... until it worked all through the dough.”**

**Many see this as meaning that the kingdom will ultimately work its way in all the world - but Yeast is always about sin - corruption.**

**This is a parable about the growth of evil in the world (the dough)**

**To the Hebrews listeners - The meal (3 measures) was the kingdom – our communion with God. The women in the story did a sneaky and evil thing hiding leaven in the meal.**

**The sowing of seed - the enemy will attempt to steal the seed**

**The Mustard seed - the enemy will attempt to corrupt from the outside**

**The Leaven tells us - the enemy will attempt to corrupt from the inside**

**Like the yeast - You don't always see the corruption at work - Yeast is small - and does its job slowly, secretly and silently, but no one can deny its effect on bread.**

**As the kingdom grows - so will religious corruption - their will be those from with-in who will be lead astray and it will affect many people.**

**Hidden in our meals, Satan subtly strikes against the truth.**

**The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocritical formality. Leaven of Sadducees is skepticism. Leaven of Herod was of self-indulgence. Leaven of the church is distorted doctrine, greed, pride, and control.**

**Paul referred to this is (1 Cor 5:6-8 - leaven of corruption, malice, wickedness) and Galatians 5:9 (NLT) - This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough!**

1. **Even the little things, can lead you astray in big ways**

**What are you allowing in your life? What seed, what leaven, what bird are you allowing to nest?**

**What is going on inside matters? What can not be seen - do not be fooled - that little thing matters...**

**In a church, a ministry, a home, a heart**

**Parables of Growth**

* + - **The Sower - Few people will understand and receive God’s word and grow in God's Kingdom**
    - **The wheat and weeds - Just as God is planting seeds, the enemy is planting seeds - as righteousness grows so will evil continue to**
    - **The Mustard seed - The kingdom will grow and corruption will nest**
    - **The Leaven - Be careful of the growing sin inside that no one sees**