

Matthew Volume 2 The Churchbook Mathew 13 28

Matthew Volume 2: The Churchbook and the Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:28)

The Gospel of Matthew, often considered "Volume 2" in a broader Christian context (following the Gospels of Mark and Luke), contains numerous profound parables. Among the most enduring and widely discussed is the parable of the wheat and the tares, found in Matthew 13:28. This parable, rich in symbolism and theological depth, serves as a pivotal point in understanding Matthew's portrayal of the Church and the kingdom of God. This article delves into Matthew 13:28, exploring its context within the broader narrative of Matthew's Gospel, its significance for understanding the church, and the enduring lessons it offers for believers today. We will also examine related concepts like **church growth**, **spiritual discernment**, **the kingdom of God**, and **end times prophecy**.

Understanding the Context of Matthew 13:28

Matthew 13:28, the culmination of the parable of the wheat and the tares, reads: "And he said, Nay: lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." This verse comes after Jesus explains the parable to his disciples. The parable depicts a farmer who sows good seed (wheat) in his field, but an enemy secretly sows weeds (tares) among it. Both grow together until harvest time, when the angels separate the wheat from the tares.

The context is crucial. Jesus, in the preceding verses, explains that the "field" represents the world, the "good seed" represents the children of the kingdom, and the "tares" represent the children of the evil one. This immediately establishes the parable's relevance to the Church – the community of believers in the midst of a world still largely influenced by evil.

The Significance of the Separation

The key takeaway from Matthew 13:28 is the instruction **not** to prematurely separate the wheat from the tares. This highlights the complexities of discerning true faith from false, and the danger of zealous, but misguided, attempts at purification. The separation, Jesus emphasizes, is ultimately God's work, to be accomplished at the end times. This understanding combats the temptation towards immediate judgment and intolerance, promoting patience and a reliance on God's perfect timing and judgment.

The Churchbook: Matthew's Portrayal of the Church

Matthew's Gospel, often referred to as a "churchbook," is deliberately structured to present a clear picture of the church – its formation, challenges, and ultimate destiny. The parable of the wheat and the tares perfectly fits within this framework. It acknowledges the inherent difficulty of distinguishing between genuine believers and those who merely appear to be so. Within this framework, Matthew 13:28 emphasizes the need for discernment, patience, and trust in God's ultimate judgment.

Spiritual Discernment and the Role of the Church

Matthew 13:28 underscores the importance of spiritual discernment – the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, good from evil. This is a vital skill for the church, helping members navigate complex moral and theological questions. However, the parable warns against hasty judgment. The line between genuine faith and superficial imitation isn't always clear. This requires wisdom, humility, and a reliance on God's guidance.

Implications for Church Growth and Discipleship

The parable of the wheat and the tares also offers invaluable insight into church growth and discipleship strategies. The focus shouldn't be solely on numerical growth, but on cultivating genuine faith and spiritual maturity. The parable teaches us that some individuals will only superficially appear to be followers, while others will exhibit the fruits of true discipleship.

Focus on Nurturing True Believers

Matthew 13:28 implies that the church's efforts should be primarily directed toward nurturing and growing the true believers – the "wheat" – rather than engaging in endless battles to weed out the "tares." This emphasizes the importance of spiritual formation, discipleship, and fostering a community of faith where believers are empowered to live out their faith authentically.

End Times Prophecy and the Final Judgment

The parable of the wheat and the tares is often interpreted within the framework of end-times prophecy. The separation of the wheat from the tares is seen as a symbol of the final judgment, when God will definitively separate the righteous from the wicked. In this context, Matthew 13:28 serves as a reminder that God's judgment is certain and just, even if it's not immediately apparent in this life.

Patience and Trust in God's Timing

The parable calls for patience and trust in God's timing. We are not responsible for judging others or prematurely separating the wheat from the tares. Our role is to remain faithful to God's word and to actively live out our faith, knowing that God will ultimately bring about justice and righteousness.

Conclusion

Matthew 13:28, within the context of Matthew's "Churchbook," provides a profound and enduring lesson about the nature of the church, spiritual discernment, and God's ultimate judgment. It warns against hasty judgment and highlights the importance of nurturing true believers while trusting in God's perfect timing for the separation of the wheat from the tares. The parable continues to resonate with believers today, offering guidance in navigating the complexities of faith and the challenges of living as disciples of Christ in a world often characterized by both genuine and counterfeit faith.

FAQ

Q1: What exactly are the "tares" in the parable?

A1: The "tares" are generally understood to represent false believers or those who outwardly profess faith but lack genuine conversion. They mimic the true believers but are ultimately insincere in their commitment. Some interpret them as representing actively malicious forces opposing the kingdom of God.

Q2: Why doesn't God immediately remove the tares?

A2: The parable doesn't explicitly state why God allows the tares and wheat to grow together, but several interpretations exist. One is to prevent damage to the wheat during premature removal. Another is to allow time for genuine repentance. It also emphasizes God's patience and the necessity of allowing spiritual growth to unfold naturally.

Q3: What is the role of the church in discerning between wheat and tares?

A3: The church's role is not to judge, but to nurture and grow genuine faith. While discernment is crucial, we should avoid premature judgment and focus on living out our faith authentically and loving others, even those who may not share our beliefs.

Q4: How does Matthew 13:28 apply to my life today?

A4: It encourages patience and tolerance in our interactions with others, avoiding hasty judgments about their faith. It also highlights the importance of personal spiritual growth and living a life that reflects genuine faith.

Q5: Is the parable only about individual salvation, or does it have implications for the church as a whole?

A5: The parable has implications for both. It speaks to individual discernment and spiritual growth, but also highlights the challenges faced by the church as a whole in navigating a world containing both true and false believers. It emphasizes the church's mission to nurture the faithful while witnessing to the world.

Q6: Does this parable suggest a passive approach to dealing with false teaching?

A6: No. While it warns against hasty or harmful actions, it doesn't advocate passivity. The church should actively proclaim the truth and confront false teachings, but always with wisdom, love, and a reliance on God's guidance, avoiding actions that could harm genuine believers.

Q7: How does this parable relate to the concept of the "great commission"?

A7: The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) calls Christians to make disciples. The parable of the wheat and the tares informs this mission; the focus should be on teaching and nurturing true disciples, rather than merely expanding numbers. Authentic discipleship is paramount.

Q8: What are the key takeaways from Matthew 13:28 regarding the end times?

A8: The parable emphasizes that God's ultimate judgment is certain and that the separation of the wheat and the tares will happen at the appointed time. This should inspire trust in God's sovereignty and justice, even in the midst of apparent chaos and injustice in the world.

Delving Deep into Matthew Volume 2: The Churchbook and the Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:28)

Matthew Volume 2, often called as "The Churchbook," lays out a crucial phase in Jesus' ministry, focusing heavily on the expansion and challenges faced by the nascent Christian community. A key passage within this portion of the gospel is Matthew 13:28, which concludes the parable of the wheat and the tares. This seemingly simple story holds profound significances for understanding the nature of the church, the battles it encounters, and the ultimate triumph of God's reign.

This article will investigate Matthew 13:28 within the broader context of Matthew Volume 2, analyzing its lesson and its importance for Christians today. We will investigate the figurative language used by Jesus, the social background of the parable, and its relevant applications for understanding the church's progress.

The parable itself illustrates a farmer who sows good seed (wheat) in his field, but an enemy secretly sows weeds (tares) among it. Both grow together until harvest time, when the servants propose uprooting the tares. The farmer, however, instructs them to allow both to grow together until harvest, preventing the risk of uprooting the wheat accidentally along with the tares. Matthew 13:28 is the culmination of this story, where the servants ask, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where then did the tares come from?" The Lord's answer - "An enemy has done this" - underlines the existence of evil and opposition within the church.

This portion of Matthew's gospel stresses the intricate nature of the Christian community. The wheat and tares, representing true believers and false believers correspondingly, thrive side-by-side, indicating that the visible church will always contain a mix of genuine and hypocritical followers of Christ. This reality challenges our interpretation of church belonging and the measures by which we judge the authenticity of faith.

The farmer's decision to postpone the separation until harvest presents a crucial lesson in patience and discernment. Attempting to quickly purge those who seem to be "tares" risks harming the true believers. This highlights the importance of allowing God to be the ultimate judge, believing in His ability to distinguish the wheat from the tares in His own time and way.

The parable's message extends beyond the immediate context of the first-century church. It serves as a ongoing cautionary tale that the church, throughout history, has faced internal strife and the effect of false teaching and hypocritical behavior. It fosters discernment, prayerful consideration and a spirit of modesty in dealing with problematic issues within the community.

Applying the principles of Matthew 13:28 in our lives involves growing a deeper understanding of the complexity of faith and community. We must learn to distinguish between genuine faith and outward demonstrations of piety. We should endeavor to guide lives characterized by love, grace, and forgiveness, bearing in mind that God alone is the ultimate judge. We must also be watchful against false teaching and passionately participate in the growth and well-being of the church.

In conclusion, Matthew 13:28, within the context of Matthew Volume 2, provides a powerful and enduring message about the nature of the church and its struggles. It prompts both patience and discernment, reminding us that the process of faith is often challenging and that the true nature of believers may not always be immediately apparent. By grasping this teaching, we can better navigate the obstacles we face within our own communities and more thoroughly accept the assurance of God's ultimate victory.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1: What is the significance of the "harvest" in the parable?

A1: The harvest represents the final judgment, when God will thoroughly distinguish the true believers (wheat) from the hypocrites and false believers (tares). This emphasizes that ultimate judgment rests with God, not with us.

Q2: How can we apply the parable's lesson to contemporary church life?

A2: We should center on cultivating genuine faith and actively fight false teaching within our church communities. We must also practice patience and discernment, avoiding rash judgments and welcoming a spirit of love and forgiveness.

Q3: Does the parable suggest we should ignore those who seem to be "tares"?

A3: No, the parable doesn't propose ignoring those who seem to be false believers. Rather, it encourages us to focus on our own faith-based development and to have faith that God will ultimately differentiate the wheat from the tares. We should nevertheless offer love and mercy to everyone.

Q4: What role does discernment play in understanding this parable?

A4: Discernment is crucial for interpreting and utilizing this parable. It helps us differentiate between true and false teaching, genuine and hypocritical faith, allowing us to navigate the challenges of church life with wisdom and compassion.

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