Message for the LORD’S DAY Morning, March 20, 2011
Christian Hope Church of Christ, Plymouth, North Carolina
by Reggie A. Braziel, Minister
(Acknowledgments to Bro. Alan Carr for some of the content of this message.)

A Parable We Must Not Ignore!
(Jesus’ Parable of The Wheat and Tares )
Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

Read Scripture Text: Matthew 13:24-30 (for now)

PRAYER

*****************************************

Introduction

In this thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches eight parables, “eight earthly stories with heavenly meanings.”

After Jesus had told the first four parables, His disciples came to Him with a question. Notice verse 36........

v. 36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

-They didn’t ask for any further explanation about the Parable of the Sower because Jesus had already explained it.

-They didn’t ask Jesus to explain the Parable of The Mustard Seed or The Parable of the Leaven.

They wanted Jesus to explain the parable we are looking at this morning, THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES. Why did they want an explanation of this particular parable? The scriptures don’t tell us, but I have a feeling it was because there was something about this parable that troubled them. And to be perfectly honest with you, there are elements of this parable that ought to trouble you and me as well.

*************
The context of this parable is quite simple, especially if you are a farmer or a gardener.

A farmer plants a wheat field. He plants good seed and expects a good harvest. But while he and his servants slept, his enemy slipped into his wheat field and planted “tares” among the wheat.

What are “tares” you ask? Tares are a peculiar weed called “Bearded Darnel.” In the early stages of its development, “Bearded Darnel” it looks exactly like wheat. It is only when the plant has “matured” and kernels have formed in the head of the genuine wheat plant that the two plants can be distinguished.

You see, the “true wheat” will have fruit in its head, while the head of the “Bearded Darnel” will be filled with little black seeds.

So here’s the farmer watching his wheat field grow. It appears that there is a whole lot more wheat in his field than he expected and he is getting excited about harvesting a “bumper crop!”

But as the harvest time nears, the farmer realizes there are “tares” in his wheat field. How can he tell? Well, the “true wheat” stalks will bend with the weight of the wheat. But the “tares” will continue to stand tall and straight because the heads are filled with those weightless little black seeds.

The servants see the problem and offer to pull up the tares, but the wise farmer realizes the roots of the tares have intertwined with the good wheat plants and if the tares are pulled up, much of the good wheat will be uprooted as well.

So the farmer counsels his servants to just allow the wheat and tares to grow together until the time of harvest, then he will send his reapers to gather the “tares” and bind them to be burned. And the good wheat will be gathered and placed in his barn.

***********************
In giving His explanation of this parable to His disciples, Jesus identifies everyone involved.

- The sower is CHRIST, Himself. (verse 37)
- The “good seed” is the GOSPEL. (verse 37)
- The field is the WORLD. (verse 38)
- The wheat are the SAVED. (verse 38)
- The “tares” are the UNSAVED that look like and act like the SAVED but aren’t. (verse 38)
- The enemy who sowed the tares is the DEVIL. (verse 39)
- The time of the harvest is the END of the AGE. (verse 39)
- And the servants who will do the reaping are the ANGELS. (verse 39)

For the remainder of the message I would like for us to consider two truths about this parable of the wheat and tares.

First of all, let’s consider …..

I. Satan Has Sown “Tares” In The World

1. One of Satan’s favorite tactics has always been to counterfeit that which is good. II Corinthians 11:14 tells us Satan loves to masquerade as an angel of light.

2. Satan loves to “plant” those in the world that look enough like the real deal one can hardly tell the difference.
3. This is why the New Testament warns us time after time to watch out for: false **CHRISTS** or false **SAVIORS** (Matt.24:4,5) false **APOSTLES** (II Cor. 11:13) false **PREACHERS** (II Cor. 11:14,15) false **GOSPELS** (Galatians 1:6-12) false **PROPHETS** (II Peter 2:1) false **DOCTRINES** (Hebrews 13:9) and false **MIRACLES** (II Thess. 2:7-12)

4. There are more “counterfeit” religions in the world than you can shake a stick at. From “religious cults” to many denominational Churches that preach something other than the true gospel, Satan’s “tares” are everywhere!

5. How can we tell the difference between the genuine and the counterfeit? Some are blatantly obvious. Others are dangerously “subtle.” Sadly, billions upon billions of people In this world have been “duped” by Satan’s counterfeit religions.

I JOHN 4:1-3 tells us, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. But this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and Is now already in the world.

6. Recently we have heard a great deal about the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas. This “church” (and I’m reluctant to even call it that) preaches hatred toward homosexuals, they desecrate the American flag, and picket the funerals of our service men who have been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Look at how Satan has used this “tare” this so-called “church” to paint the Lord’s true Church in a negative light in our media.

7. As Jesus warned in this parable, one day all the “tares” all the “false churches”.......all the “false teachers, false preachers and false prophets” will be gathered up and burned in the eternal fires of hell.
II. Satan Has Sown “Tares” In The Church

1. This truth is very evident when you study The Lord’s Letters to The Seven Churches in Revelation 2, 3. Of those seven Churches, the LORD found just two that passed His divine inspection. The LORD rebuked five of those seven Churches, some of them for blatantly teaching false doctrines and tolerating gross sin in their Church.

2. You see, just like the “tares” in Jesus’ parable there are lots of people who LOOK SAVED, ACT SAVED, and THINK they are SAVED who are not really SAVED!

That is a disturbing truth, is it not?

3. Just a few chapters earlier, in Matthew chapter 7, Jesus said…..

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

4. Do you realize that around one-third of the world’s population claims to be Christian. That’s roughly 2.2 BILLION people. In other words, one out of every three people on this planet claims to be a Christian.

But how many of those 2.2 billion are “wheat” and how many are “tares.”

5. The late evangelist, R.A. Torrey, said “It is better for a man to live with NO HOPE at all, than to live with FALSE HOPES OF HEAVEN.

Torrey said, “The man who goes through life with FALSE HOPES thinks he is saved when he isn’t, so he doesn’t do anything to change his situation. But the man who has NO HOPE, may one day see his lost condition and accept Jesus Christ.”
(A) There are many who believe GOOD WORKS will save them.

EPHESIANS 2:8, 9 (NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Do you realize “salvation by works” is taught by every false religion? The Hindus, the Buddhists, The Muslims, The Seventh-Day Adventists, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, all teach “salvation by works.”

Sadly there are lots of people who “profess” to be Christians who believe “good works” or the lack thereof is what will determine whether or not they will go to heaven.

I’ve heard people who profess to be Christians say, “I hope and pray that when I die my good deeds will outweigh my bad and the Lord will let me into heaven.”

Oh brothers and sisters, please listen! You and I are not saved by what we do for our neighbor, we are saved by what JESUS did on the cross! You and I are not saved by what we do in the Church, we are saved by what JESUS did on the cross! It is THE WORK OF CHRIST on the cross that saves us, not our WORKS!

HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD! “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

(B) There are many who believe GOOD MORALS will get them into heaven.

Remember the account of The Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19? That young man had lived a very moral life. He had obeyed the Ten Commandments from the time he was a little boy. If “good morals” could save anyone, The Rich Young Ruler was a “shoe in” for heaven.

The Rich Young Ruler had good morals but what he didn’t have was salvation. After Jesus told him to “go sell all he had and give it to the poor,” Matthew records, the young man “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”
Don’t miss the point of what Jesus is teaching us in that account. He is teaching us that **GOOD MORALS ARE GOOD, BUT GOOD MORALS WON’T SAVE US.**

Without a doubt, the hardest people to win to Jesus Christ are those who see themselves as a “basically good human being.”

We must never forget that no matter how moral we are, no matter how good we are, “our righteousness is as filthy rags” compared to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And only those “clothed with the righteousness of Christ” will be saved.

**HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD…………**

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

(C) There are many who believe **GOING to CHURCH** will get them into heaven.

Well aren’t we supposed to be in Church on the Lord’s Day? Absolutely! The Lord commands us, **“Not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as some are in the habit of doing. But encourage each other all the more as we see the Day approaching!”**

If you are here every time the Church doors are open….. If you are here for Sunday School, Sunday morning worship, Sunday night services and Wednesday night Bible Study, that is absolutely wonderful. **BUT THAT WON’T SAVE YOU!**

Sitting in a Church house every Sunday doesn’t make you a Christian any more than sitting in a hen house every day makes you a hen.

**HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD…………**

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
(D) There are many who believe having their NAME on a Church ROLL BOOK will get them into heaven.

REVELATION 20:15 says, “And anyone not found in the BOOK of LIFE was cast into the lake of fire.

Oh dear Christians, how many people are living with the false security that they are saved just because their name is written on some Church’s roll book.

In the end it won’t matter if your name was written on Christian Hope’s Church roll book or Poplar Chapel’s Church roll book or Plymouth Church of Christ’s roll book.

The only thing, I repeat THE ONLY THING that will matter is if your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD........
“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

(E) There are many who believe just because they got BAPTIZED they will go to heaven.

Well doesn’t the scriptures command us to be baptized? Absolutely!

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent and let every one of you BE BAPTIZED in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

MARK 16:16 Jesus said, “He who BELIEVES and is BAPTIZED shall be SAVED, but he who does not BELIEVE will be condemned.

What Jesus is saying there is while baptism is essential for one’s salvation, baptism without belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is meaningless.

What good is baptism if it is not followed by a life of faithfulness and obedience unto death?
What good is baptism if one goes right back to the sinful ways of the world and does not bring forth “fruits of true repentance?”

HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD! “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

(F) There are many who believe saying “the SINNER’S PRAYER” will save them.

Here is “a sample” sinner’s prayer.........

"Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

Sounds like “good prayer” doesn’t it? But can anyone please show me the Book, Chapter and Verse where that prayer is located in the Bible?

-If praying the “sinner’s prayer” is the way to salvation, why didn’t Peter command those at Pentecost to pray the “sinner’s prayer” instead of “repent and be baptized?”

-If praying the “sinner’s prayer” is the way to salvation, why didn’t Philip tell the Ethiopian Eunuch, “there’s no need to be baptized, just say the “sinner’s prayer?”

-If praying the “sinner’s prayer” is the way to salvation why didn’t Jesus commission us to “Go ye therefore and teach all nations “the sinners” prayer?”

Think of the millions upon millions of people who believe they are saved because they prayed “the sinner’s prayer.”

HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD! “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
NOW I KNOW SOME OF YOU ARE GOING TO COME UP TO ME AT THE DOOR AFTERWARDS THIS MORNING AND SAY SOMETHING LIKE, “BOY, YOU STEPPED ALL OVER MY TOES THIS MORNING,” OR “MAN, YOU REALLY MADE ME WONDER IF I AM A CHRISTIAN,” OR “AFTER HEARING THAT SERMON I REALLY WONDER IF I’M SAVED.”

I ASSURE YOU THAT MY OBJECTIVE IN PREACHING THIS MESSAGE THIS (MORNING/EVENING) HAS NOT BEEN TO GET YOU TO DOUBT YOUR SALVATION, BUT TO ADMONISH EACH AND EVERYONE OF US TO OBEY THE COMMAND THE APOSTLE PAUL GAVE TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH AND THAT IS TO, “EXAMINE YOURSELF TO SEE IF YOU ARE TRULY IN THE FAITH.”

ILLUSTRATION: ANCIENT GREECE WAS KNOWN FOR ITS MANY STATUES OF FALSE GODS. THE ANCIENT SCULPTORS OF THOSE STATUES WOULD OFTEN HIDE THE CRACKS AND IMPERFECTIONS OF THOSE STATUES BY FILLING THEM WITH WAX.

TO THE CASUAL OBSERVER OF THOSE STATUES THOSE IMPERFECTIONS WOULD GO UN-NOTICED. BUT WHEN THE SUMMER HEAT WOULD BEAR DOWN ON THOSE STATUES IT WOULD CAUSE THE WAX TO MELT THUS REVEALING THE UGLY TRUTH. THE BEAUTY WAS ONLY SUPERFICIAL. THE BEAUTY WASN’T REAL.

AS THE “HEAT” INCREASES IN THESE DIFFICULT DAYS LEADING UP TO THE LORD’S RETURN WILL THE HEAT EXPOSE “SUPERFICIALITY” OR WILL IT “TEMPER” YOUR FAITH LIKE HARDENED STEAL? WILL THE “HEAT” SHOW THAT YOU ARE A “TRUE BELIEVER” OR “A MAKE-BELIEVER?” WILL THE “HEAT” SHOW THAT YOU ARE WHEAT OR WILL IT SHOW YOU ARE “A TARE?”

“EXAMINE YOURSELF TO SEE IF YOU ARE TRULY IN THE FAITH!”