

# The Kingdom of Heaven

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of staying faithful to God in the midst of temptation and the struggle between good and evil.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 13:24

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Prioritizing Christ"

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## Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the dual nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, highlighting the ongoing spiritual warfare on earth where good and evil coexist. He explains that while Jesus is the sower of good seed, the enemy, represented by the devil, sows tares among the wheat, leading to confusion and conflict. Stegen warns against allowing anything to take precedence over Jesus in our lives, stressing that He must remain the cornerstone and the ultimate priority. The sermon calls for vigilance against the devil's schemes, urging believers to choose life and remain steadfast in their faith. Ultimately, the message is a reminder of the final judgment where the righteous will be gathered into God's kingdom while the wicked will face destruction.

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## Transcript

Matt 13

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.  
wheat-tares6.jpg (37470 bytes)

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

It's not always easy to understand the parables of the Lord Jesus. There are many who see and hear, but they don't grasp what Jesus tells them.

May the Lord Jesus enlighten our eyes to see and our ears to hear so that we might understand what God is saying to us.

Let's just look at a few points, under the headings of "the Kingdom of Heaven", "the Lord as King of this Kingdom" and "the enemy".

The Kingdom of Heaven has two aspects, in heaven and on earth. The Kingdom in heaven is the one that has overcome already. But the Kingdom of heaven in this world is where the fight is still on. We're still involved in warfare in different ways. God's word teaches us to fight the good fight of faith while we're still on this earth.

Jesus said that if you love anything more than Him you're not worthy of Him, be it wife, husband or children.

CT Studd said that many of his missionaries were sharp and on fire for Jesus before they got married but after they got married they became blunt. May we not be like that but that the Lord Jesus remain first in all things in our life. Jesus is first in everything. The first one resurrected from the dead. We might be the bricks in God's house but Jesus is the cornerstone. We may be saved but He is the Saviour. We, as children of the Lord, are members of His body, but the head of that body is Jesus Christ. In all things the Lord Jesus is preeminent. Woe to you if the Lord Jesus ends up being second or third in your life. He always has to have the highest position in every aspect. We are to love Him above everything else.

Jesus is also your security and not your house or money, but He Himself. wheat-atares4.jpg (29696 bytes)

Jesus often spoke about farming and used many farming examples in His parables. Farming is in my blood since our family were farmers. So, this parable is of particular meaning to me.

Jesus explained in this parable that the Son of man Himself is the sower. sower-of-wheat.jpg (18261 bytes) The enemy is the devil.

At night while everyone slept the enemy sowed weeds. What the Lord Jesus did He did in daylight, but the devil works at night while it's dark when no one notices.

Lucifer was not satan from the beginning. God created him as a good angel. He was one of the holy angels, even one of the greater angels, like a prince among them. But sadly he fell through pride, and lost the wonderful position he had had. We don't know too much about his fall and when he turned his back on God, but we do know that it came about because of being puffed up.

With pride comes a fall. When you're puffed up, you're sure to fall. Satan fell because he desired to be like God. He wanted to be God. A person misled by the devil no longer emanates the image of God but the image of satan.

Lucifer didn't fall alone but his tail drew a third of the stars. That means one out of three angelic beings joined the devil in the rebellion.

It's tragic when someone forsakes what is good and joins with what is evil. He is like the devil and has become a tare.

Today satan still fights against everything that's good and resists God in every way. He tries to get to God through His creation.

Don't for a moment think that the devil ever comes with good intentions, even when he comes as an angel of light. He comes to spoil things. He promises many things and paints such a wonderful picture for you, but you don't know you're on your way to hell if you follow him.

Think of Adam and Eve. God created everything so wonderfully and beautifully for them, but the devil came and by obeying him everything was spoiled and they were driven from the garden, the ground was cursed and the woman also had to suffer from that day onwards in childbirth. Adam had to live by the sweat of his brow.

Many often realise too late the cost of obeying the devil.

The good seed represents the genuine children of God. But we find them together with evil people in this world.

Jesus prayed, "Father I don't pray that you take them out of the world but keep them in the world from the evil one".

Even in the early church everything went so well but then the devil entered through Ananias and Sapphira and then through the widows complaining about the daily distributions.

That's why the Lord Jesus taught us to watch and pray. Jesus knows how sly the devil is.

If you don't listen when Jesus tells you to watch and pray, you will wake up when the devil has already done a lot of damage and it might even be too late.

But it's wonderful to know that all power and authority has been given to Jesus. He is coming again, on the clouds, and we shall see Him, and every knee shall bow before Him!

Hell was not created for man, but for the devil and his angels. But if you join yourself to him, then you will join him in hell too.

God wants you to decide to turn your back on the devil and choose life. He won't force you.

If Jesus should force you to choose for Him and it didn't come from a true conviction in your heart to serve Him, you would do as the children of Israel who were saved from Egypt. Before long they desired the flesh pots of Egypt and wanted to return.

Are you wheat or tare? The wheat will be gathered in heaven's barn. The tares will be burned.

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