

Are You Wheat or Tare?

by Shane Idleman

The sermon challenges listeners to examine their spiritual state and discern whether they are true believers or false ones, using the parable of the wheat and the tare as a foundation.

Duration: 42:14

Scripture: Isaiah 55:6-7, Matthew 13:24-33, Matthew 25:1-13, Luke 13:6-9, Luke 15:11-32, Acts 26:18, Ephesians 5:14-17

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of self-examination and the use of parables by Jesus to awaken hearts. It emphasizes the need for worship, prayer, and repentance to transform lives and warns about the consequences of spiritual slumber and the judgment to come. The message challenges listeners to assess whether they are wheat or tare, urging them to seek the Lord, forsake wickedness, and apply the Word of God in their lives for true transformation.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Matthew chapter 13, Matthew chapter 13, and we're going to talk about a parable, the parable of the wheat and the tare, Matthew 13 verse 24, but I want to skip ahead, I want to skip ahead to Matthew 13 34 and explain why are we going to talk about a parable. Here's why. All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables, and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, and I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.

I will open my mouth in parables. Why would Jesus want to talk to us in parables? Why not just tell us the truth? Just say what it is. Don't beat around the bush and soil and seeds and wheat and tare and fig trees and coins.

Jesus, just get to the point. Why are you trying to speak in parables? Well, couple things. What we learned two weeks ago, it's not the seed.

The seed is the Word of God. The seed is perfect. It's the soil.

So you can have a perfect seed and be planted in terrible soil, and guess what's not going to happen? It's not going to grow. The Word of God is not going to grow. The soil, we have to put this in the correct soil.

So what parables do is they nourish the soil. So when Jesus would give a parable, it would help to nourish the soil of our heart so that the seed could flourish, the seed could thrive. Also what he's doing here is he's fulfilling prophecy.

I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. So he's saying, listen, this is what the prophet spoke about. I'm going to utter parables.

And a mystery isn't something, you know, it's a mystery. All a mystery is is something that was secret is now being revealed. So that's what Jesus is doing.

He's coming on the scene. He's revealing something that was secret, but now it's being fulfilled. It's being revealed.

But before I get to that, do you know what a parable is? Here's the definition of a parable. It's a simple, not complex, a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. So Jesus is telling a story in order to get a certain point across, get a lesson across.

Now here's why I believe. We often don't like direct confrontation, do we? I'm not the only one here, right? We do not like direct confrontation. So a parable is often used to go in through the side door.

And reveal something that we are not looking at. Even though the truth is right in our face, sometimes it takes a parable to bring that truth out. And this is why self-examination is very healthy.

Very healthy. To examine ourselves, to examine our hearts, it's very healthy. And I was reminded of the disciples when Jesus said right before he was betrayed, he said, one of you will betray me.

And guess what they all said? Lord, is it I? Lord, that's healthy. Self-examination is very, very healthy. I would encourage you to do it often.

That's what the word of God does. It examines self. It's for self-examination to see where I'm wrong and to make changes.

Self-examination, where I need encouragement, it encourages. Where I'm discouraged, it encourages. Where there's fear, it brings hope.

Where there's animosity, it brings comfort. Self-examination is very important. And here's an example of a parable I actually forgot all about until yesterday that I gave probably a few years ago.

But I'm going to show you how a parable works even in our time. It's a story of a young girl. She was probably ten years old.

And she just found out that her dad was leaving, her mom, leaving the family, saying, you know, I'm out of here. Sorry. You know, you guys, kids are resilient.

You'll grow. You'll get over it. I'll see you from time to time.

And she was devastated, her and her sister. Well, later that night, she had a dream, actually a nightmare of her and her sister and her mom dying in a horrific car crash. And when she told her dad the next day, the dad said, well, I'm glad it wasn't only, I'm glad it was only a dream.

And that was kind of, you know, his way to get through it. But she said, but dad, right before the car hit and we all died, I looked through the window and the person driving the other car was you. And I think it was focused on the family.

Her family after today, I heard a few years ago, that actually caused the man to repent and return and rebuild his marriage. So why was it weeks and weeks of, hey, you're going the wrong direction. Open the door.

This is wrong. This is wrong. Yeah, I know.

I know this is wrong. I don't care. You know, God knows my heart.

I just want to be happy and all this garbage. But what happened with this type of parable? What man in the right mind would not just start weeping and work on his family? Or wife, whatever the scenario is there. And I think this parable has even meaning for us today with that girl.

There are many people in this room who hear this on the radio, who hear this on the video. You are hurting your family. You are damaging your family.

And you need a wake up call. You need something to awaken you. And I'm hoping that this sermon can fit that because we need without a parable, without a story to show what is really happening.

We often don't see it. So that was the whole point of the parable is to awaken. Jesus would just sit and waste time.

He said, listen, it's like this. The kingdom of God is like this. Your hearts are like this.

And he would show us so we can be awakened. So the first area, self-examination, verse 24, chapter 13. You know, a group this size, I don't know where all of you are spiritually, but one of the points of this parable is going to be this.

Self-examination. Are you a tare? You think you're a wheat, but are you the tare? Are you the false and not the true? Because that's the whole point of this parable. One of the points, Jesus is saying God is going to judge everybody at the end.

He's going to separate the wheat from the tare. I'm pretty sure his point was make sure you're the wheat and not the tare. What would be the point of exhausting all of that, that energy to talk, to give this story? So let's read it briefly.

Verse 24, another parable he put forth to them, saying the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came in, sowed tare among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

So the servants of the owner came and said to him, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? He said to them, An enemy has done this. The servant said to him, Do you want us to go out and gather them up? But he said, No, lest while you gather up the tares, you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.

And at the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers first, gather together the tares and bind them up into bundles and burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn. So Jesus is saying there is a judgment coming where the angels will come and they will sift, they will pull the wheat and the tares out and they will distinguish between the two. And what should cause us to go, Uh oh, okay, who am I? What group am I? I don't want to be a bundle thrown into the fire.

I want to be a wheat gathered into the barn. And that should awaken something. But while he slept, this is interesting, I noted this, that while he slept, the enemy came in.

The enemy didn't come in at night or day while they were working the farm and they got their picks and shovels and they were watering. He came at night when everybody's asleep. And that's what the enemy often does.

He'll come in at night. Maybe not physically when it's dark, but night, when it's undercover, subtlety. Why? Why is that? Well, many go through life asleep to the things of God.

I'm talking right here even about Christians or unbelievers. Many are asleep to the things of God. Have you ever wondered that? I mean, you look at the direction of the nation, you look at the direction of the church, you guys have any pulse on what's going on spiritually? Is your heart a heart of worship and a heart of prayer? Where's the things of God? Why are they dead? Why are they dying? The reason, I believe, one of the reasons is there's no self-examination or very little self-examination.

So the enemy wants to keep us asleep. And that spiritual slumber is what I call it. We're dead to the things of God, we're just asleep.

It's like our two-year-old, she's turning two pretty soon, often she'll wake up at night or from her nap and you know that scream, right? Or that cry? She doesn't scream, cry. It's like, oh no, why is she up? So what do we do? We go pull her up, get her up. No, no, no, no, no, no.

Nobody's up. Nobody's watching TV, nobody's having fun. We're all asleep.

Twinkle, twinkle little star. It's all the songs I have to sing now. You guys would pay to see that, wouldn't you? And she goes up, up, up.

No, no, no. But that's what the devil does. When we start to examine ourselves, He says, it's not you, it's the other person.

Shh, shh, shh, go back to sleep. Wait a minute, but God's convicting me. No, it's not you, it's not you.

It's the other person. Don't examine yourself, it's the other person. Shh, shh, shh, go back to sleep, spiritually.

Well, what about, I'm looking at myself. No, it's not you, it's your boss, it's your job. It's not you, you're not the problem.

You don't need to examine yourself, you're not the problem. The greatest trick of the enemy is to say, you're not the problem. Shh, shh, shh, go back to sleep.

And as we examine ourselves, He says, it's not you, it's your family, it's your parents, it's your kids, it's the government. That's the problem. Shh, shh, shh, shh.

So every time we want, wait, wait, wait, is it me? No, no, no, no, no, no. Shh, shh, go back to sleep. Right where I have you.

Right where I have you. So no change takes place. So you can live in that spiritual slumber.

In that spiritual sleep until the day you die. That's how the enemy works, folks. I'm sure of that.

I'm sure the sun's coming up tomorrow morning. He wants to keep you in that. He fears you examining yourself.

Why do you think we love excuses? And something I call blame shifting. I'll shift the blame to something else. Unless you think I'm preaching to you, I'm preaching to me as well.

We all need to hear this type of message. Shh, shh, shh, go back to sleep. Everything's okay.

It's not you. It's not you. So be careful because parables are often meant to awaken, to challenge.

Paul actually said examine yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? One of the most healthy things you can do is examine yourself in light of Scripture. Not the buts, not the yeah, everything else, but examine yourself in the light of Scripture and say, in this case, am I a terror? Am I just playing church? Am I going through the motions? Am I saying the right things? Characteristics of a terror.

They have no heart for God. They say they do, but their actions reveal otherwise. They're full of excuses and blame shifting.

Pride is the dominating characteristic of their life. For the terror to say, look, look, look, I'm wheat. It doesn't work.

No, I'm wheat. I really am wheat. I know I don't look like wheat.

I don't taste like wheat. I don't smell like wheat, but I want to be wheat. He says, no, that's terror.

That's terror. That's weed. There's a distinction.

Or, if a person isn't the terror, and a lot of this sermon still applies, it may be that they are just a tiny shoot of wheat coming up, but the terror is crowding it out. The cares of this life, what we talked about a couple weeks ago, that there's no root, there's no soil. You're crowded out.

I can't tell what you are. You're a little green thing. I don't know what you are.

You look just like wheat. I mean, just like weeds. Just like terror.

I know you say you're wheat. You might be, but there's no growth there. There's nothing.

There's immaturity. You resemble a terror. But I can see the potential there.

So keep growing. Keep mustering up, and keep moving forward. You will eventually come out of that.

So here's the good news for terrors. A terror cannot change. Right? It's a weed.

It cannot change, but a sinner can. A sinner can change. Acts 26, open your eyes and turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the power of God, so that you may receive forgiveness of sin.

Terrors can't change. Weeds can't change their colors. Weeds can't go from weed to this, but sinners can with God's help, with God calling them to repentance.

Isaiah 55, 6-7, Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him. And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Now here's what happens.

You Bible scholars out there will probably know this. Who is Isaiah writing to? God's people. And so many times we just glance over this.

Well, I'm not wicked. This doesn't apply to me. The children of God were turning away from God.

Their hearts had grown cold, callous, and hard. Wicked just means something that opposes God. So He's saying, listen, seek the Lord while He may be found.

Call upon Him. This can apply to the unbeliever who doesn't know God. So the call is turned to me, and it can return to a child of God.

Somebody, I knew God, but I've drifted. I've got this wickedness in my life. I've got this immaturity.

I've drifted from God. So the point for both people is seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake His way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord. In both cases, this won't be a surprise to you because you've heard me say it before, but repentance is not a recommendation.

Repentance is not a recommendation. It is the only hope. The only hope for a person who doesn't know God to know God.

It is the only hope for a Christian who has lost his way to get back on track. It's not an option. Until we turn back to soul-searching, Christ-centered, Bible-believing, truth-elevating, grace-filled preaching, we will not see change.

That's what Jesus was doing with this parable. He was preaching into the hearts of the people. And many times people often say, well, settle down, Shane.

Settle down. Why do you get all worked up? Well, think about this. 2,600 Americans die per day.

Per day. The occult is one of the fastest-growing religions in our nation. Porn is captivating millions of Christians.

Suicide is an epidemic, and marriages are on life support, and you want me to settle down. You want me to calm down. Bring it down a notch.

I can't. I can't. I like what Robert Murray McShaney said on your bulletin.

I put it there. As I was walking in the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell. Oh, how I wish that I had a tongue like thunder.

I fear that you will lay the blame of your damnation at my door. What he's saying, and I started to realize this, 50, 60 years from now, everybody in this room, it depends how old you get, of course, but we will either be in heaven or hell. Let that reality sink in for a minute.

We forget that, don't we? Go back to sleep. Go back to sleep. And for some, he does that until it's too late.

And that's why it's one of the burdens of my heart. Everybody who comes in this door will either be in heaven or hell. That's why he said, Lord, give me a tongue of thunder.

What does thunder do? Is it thunder comforting? Oh, goodness. Go stand up on a mountain someday and hold a big piece of metal. Well, it's thundering and lightning.

See how comfortable you feel. That's the voice of thunder. That's the voice of God.

When God used to speak and they would hear a voice of doves? Thunder. Thunder. Conviction.

Conviction. And it was said of this man, Robert Murray McShaney, he died at age 29. He was one of Scotland's most anointed preachers.

When he would come to the pulpit, people would begin weeping just before even saying a word because the anointing, the power of God was on his life so hard he felt the heartbeat of God. And he said, oh, they're either going to be in heaven or hell. And I started to think about this week.

Isn't that true? Everybody who comes in there, everybody who would come in contact with heaven or hell, there's no middle ground. Shh, shh, shh, shh. Don't worry about that right now.

Don't worry about that right now. So that's sometimes why now you can maybe better understand my passion. I'm not called to be a motivational speaker.

I'm not called for everybody to just leave here and go, wasn't that pleasant? I'm dealing with death and life. Death cannot be played with. It must be confronted.

Whether it's spiritual death where we're dying spiritually or it's death of a marriage or it's death of a relationship with God, whatever it is, you have to do heart surgery. That's the heartbeat of a pastor that's called to do that. Or there's self examination for a believer.

Am I dying spiritually? Am I being choked by the weed? This is sometimes why a person is not acting like a Christian. The thorns are choking the good seed. So we have wheat and tare growing up together.

It's interesting, I noted this week also, America, the good thing is, did you know that we are the number one distributor of the gospel around the world? The wheat. But we are the number one distributor of pornography around the world. Tare.

Unbelievable. America has set millions of people free but has destroyed millions of babies. Wheat and tare.

You see how they grow together? Let's pass all these laws so there's no more tare. I'm a big fan of godly legislation but that's not going to get rid of the tares. So you better come to that understanding now so you can pray and fast and have God remove the tares.

Have God's will be done. In America the Bible is the number one selling book yet sexual perversion is an epidemic. In America healthy marriages built this country but divorce and selfishness are killing it.

We read our Bibles yet treat our spouses like garbage. Wheat and tare. We quote the Bible but don't obey it.

We're quick to point out the flaws in others but not our own. We go to church smiling but anger dominates our home. We hate self-righteous people but we rarely look in the mirror.

Hey, I didn't come to win a popularity contest tonight. That's out the window. And if you don't like what I'm saying you need to hear what I'm saying.

I know it's kind of a joke but it's true. Jesus wants us to awaken from our spiritual slumber. How long are we going to keep playing this game? How long? That's what the enemy wants.

Ephesians 5 Awake you who sleep arise from the dead and Christ will give you light. Ephesians 5 8 before that. For you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of the light for the fruit of the Spirit is goodness and righteousness and truth. Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord and have no fellowship no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them. Now this is very interesting.

This doesn't mean point out the flaws in others. This means point out the flaws within. Expose the unfruitful works of darkness that are coming up within that are not allowing me to walk in the light of Christ.

And another commentary on this from the Message Bible. I wouldn't encourage this Bible to use as a study Bible but more as a commentary on the Bible. Ephesians 5 this guy Eugene Peterson is dead on with this portion.

You groped your way through and the murk once but no longer. You're now in the open. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain.

No more stumbling around. Get on with it. The good, the right, the truth.

These are the actions appropriate for daylight hours. Figure out what will please Christ and do it. Wow! Who's going to say I didn't know that but how simple is this? You want half of your problems to vanish tonight? I'm not making this up.

Find out what Christ wants you to do and then do it. Don't waste your time on useless work. Mere busy work.

The pursuit of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see.

Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ. That's a pretty good commentary. And then here's my favorite part.

Wake up from your sleep. Climb out of your coffin and Christ will show you the light. Here's what he's saying in that show.

Apply the Word of God. Don't quote it. Apply the Word of God.

Don't quote it. I am so tired of people quoting Scripture without obeying it. That if I had a dollar for every time that happened, you too, right? You wouldn't need Social Security.

Don't count on that. Okay, but don't count on people applying Scripture. This is a challenge for myself included.

We know it, but we don't apply it. And the powers and the application, you can't mix the purity of God's Word with the filth of rebellion. You can't mix the purity of God's Word with the filth of pride.

You can't mix it. And I'll give you a good current parable or analogy. You want one? It applies now.

Okay, we don't have to go too far. See if this works. Okay.

Just went to Home Depot. You like that, Shaley? What is this? Huh? Uh-oh. I don't think it's working.

Oh, it smells terrible. Can you believe this, Vivian? Whoa! Wow! What are you doing? What are you doing? That's the same thing in the spiritual. This is a physical analogy what's happening in the spiritual.

You hear the Word of God, but you don't apply it. You mix pride and rebellion with the purity of God's Word. That's how foolish that looks.

The toxic. I'm getting sick. You know it was water, right? Okay, good.

Because the first service didn't know that. They were worried. But with all joking aside, you can't mix the purity of God's Word and the filth of rebellion.

That's why change isn't taking place. That's why nothing is changing. Because you can't take what I know and divorce it from what I need to do.

You might as well do that. That's what it looks like to God. Shame.

Bug killer all over you? Yeah. It's what we do in the spiritual. Just no difference.

So here Jesus goes on to explain the parable of the tares. He who sows the good seed is the son of man, but the field is the world. The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.

The enemy sowed them. The enemy was the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

Therefore, as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so will be at the end of this age. The son of man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend. And those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire.

There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. Now this is interesting.

These are hard things to hear, right? Do you realize I'm not just cherry picking certain verses? We start in Matthew 1, we're in Matthew 13. And how often is Jesus warning? Maybe one thing, if I look at all these bad scriptures, oh my goodness. Oh Shane, you're making a case for you're pulling out.

No, I'm just reading through the Bible. Just reading through the Bible. So it's interesting, if a pastor says that Jesus will send out his angels.

Just think if I'm on Oprah, Monday morning. So Pastor Shane, what do you think? Well, Jesus is going to send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all the things that offend and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into a furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

We are called Bible thumpers, hellfire and brimstone preachers, radical extreme. Get them out of here. But that's Jesus' words.

Why is he telling the people that? He's saying, listen, there will come a day when God will judge the living and the dead. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord. The terror will be bundled up and thrown into the fire, unquenchable fire.

There's no weeping and gnashing of teeth. The wheel will be gathered and going into the Father's barn. You better know what side you're on.

That's the whole point. Yet we're not supposed to talk about this. Because somebody might leave offended.

Good. Good. I hope.

I hope you go home and examine your life in the light of the gospel. Self-examination. I don't like that guy, Shane.

But Lord, am I weak or am I tear? I'm tear and I need. I don't want to end up like that. But as soon as you get in your car, you put on the old music.

Oh man, don't listen to that guy. Isn't that a great trick? Get him out of there. Get him out of there.

And trust me, you think I get excited about messages like this? I try to get out of it. Oh man, is there another way around this one? No, it's what the Bible says. Jesus says.

It's something very interesting. Jesus spoke more about hell than heaven. This nice, mild, meek-mannered, turn-the-other-cheek Jesus spoke more about the realities of hell than heaven.

Why? Think about it. If you truly did not want somebody going there, would you not warn them? What parent in their right mind is going to be glad that their child ends up in hell? If you believe the Bible, the inerrancy of Scripture, that thought should really motivate us to pray and to seek God and to check our own hearts. Listen, I come across people all the time speaking different places and you'd be amazed at how many people have been coming to church for years and their cares.

They're in leadership, they're in the children's ministry, they're serving and they're not even believers. They look pretty similar, don't they? Can you spot the weed in there? Or the tear? So self-examination is the whole point of these parables. So why did Jesus use parables? You probably wrote that question because I didn't know I'd already answered it.

Why did He use parables? He used them to awaken the spiritually dead or dying. What about earlier, we talked about a few weeks ago, the sower and the seed. He says, make sure your seed lands on good soil of the heart.

Why? Don't let the thorns choke it. Don't let the stony gravel have no foundation. What's He doing? He's warning.

What about the grain of wheat that dies? Jesus said, unless a grain of wheat dies, it will bear nothing. Dying to self. The whole context of that parable is losing your life for the sake of Christ.

Unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abideth and produces nothing. But if it dies, that's where the life comes from. He's warning.

Listen, He's saying, have you died to self? Have you surrendered your life? Do you care more about your life? Because if you care more about your life than Christ, you will lose it. That's Jesus. We've got to read the Bible cover to cover to get the correct understanding of who He was.

Because the same Bible says he was a lamb. They say he was a lion. The same Bible says he turned the other cheek, says he's coming with the armies of heaven and on and he's riding a white horse and the angels of our of heaven will follow him and out of his mouth will go a sword that he will strike the nations and he will rule the nations with the rod of iron and he will tread the wine press and fierceness and wrath of almighty God and he will have a name written King of kings and Lord of lords.

That's what the Bible says in all its totality, in its completeness. Thanks for the claps, but don't clap. And then the weeds and the terror, the weeds and the terror, where we're at here, what about the barren fig tree in Luke 13? Was Jesus, oh look at that barren fig tree, isn't that cute? He said, if your life is like that, let's cut that fig tree down and burn it, throw it into the fire.

Wow. He's showing, listen, look at the fig tree, look at this, why? Because you have to come in the back door. You have to come in the back door.

You can't say, hey, you might be on the broad road to destruction. You have to show them why they're on the broad road to destruction. Look what it looks like from a scriptural course.

What about the prodigal son? Is that not a warning? When the prodigal son came to himself, he spent everything in riotous living. The King James says, he spent his substance in riotous living. That's taking everything he has ahead to Vegas, for us.

And he spent all, everything, and when he came to himself, he returned to the Father. A lot of people say, oh, it wasn't about that. That was about the mean elder brother.

Look at that mean elder brother. Yeah, that's true. But if you think that story is just only about the mean elder brother, that means you are seeker sensitive and you want to avoid difficult truths.

It's about repentance and returning to the Father. That's the context. What about the demon invasion we talked about a few chapters, or a few sermons ago? About when the devil leaves, if we don't clean up that house, the context with salvation, he'll bring in seven other demons, and the last state of that man or woman is worse than the first.

Is Jesus just trying to be what? Pleasant here? What's wrong with this guy? What's wrong? Nothing. He's the Son of God saying, you need parables to awaken your hard hearts. You need to see the true condition of your heart.

What about the parable of the ten virgins? And this is my concern for many of the church. When the bridegroom comes again, five are ready, five are not. It's been debated.

Was it salvation? Was it just this? I just don't want to be the five that aren't ready. Don't let the theologians debate the nuances of the verb tenses and all these things. But when he comes again, and we're not ready, ready is the whole point of that message.

Be ready. Do not be carried away by the things of this world. And then he goes on in verse 31, another parable he put forth to them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed the least of all the seeds, but when it grows it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

And I just thought right there, don't despise the day of small beginnings. The mustard seed. The kingdom of God will grow.

It will flourish. You cannot stomp out the kingdom of God. They've tried it.

They've tried to get rid of the Bible. They've tried to kill everything. It doesn't work.

It's a seed and it will grow and it will grow and it will be the strongest of all the trees. That's the analogy there. What about the parable of the leaven? Another parable he spoke, the kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened.

In other words, a little bit of leaven leavens a whole loaf of bread. It affects a whole everything. So the kingdom of God in your heart should affect everything.

Listen, this is heart self-examination time. If the kingdom of God is not changing you, if it's not challenging you, if there's not some resemblance of wheat there, that's a scary spot to live. You're living your life with a question mark.

Because the word of God is very clear that the wheat, the children of God, obey the word of God. Not just know it. The Pharisees knew it.

The Pharisees could quote the Bible better than me. But their hearts were wrong. Their hearts were stony.

Their hearts were hard. Their hearts were rebellious. So here's the good news for those who are dying spiritually.

If you're in this stage, this is my favorite part of the sermon because this is where most amount of change can take place. You have to remove the tears that are growing in your life through worship, prayer and repentance. That's why I can't get away from these three themes.

I've thought of the other ones before. How about potlucks? How about driving with Air One on? Let's give us something new. We can't.

This is how you rejuvenate the heart. And what happened a month ago for somebody else could happen tonight. What happened last year for somebody else could happen tonight.

What happened two weeks ago for somebody else could happen tonight. We always have to foster worship and prayer and repentance. That's all the message does is to point you to that.

It points you to the cross. It points you to this time. Why? Because these things crush pride.

They eliminate excuses. They soften our hearts and they transform impossible situations. Can I just give a brief personal testimony? If I don't worship and all I do is study the Bible, you won't want to be around me.

If all I do is read, I read this an hour a day. Let me tell you what I learned. Because knowledge puffs up.

You become a Pharisee. You become arrogant. You become proud.

Worship breaks you. The Bible gives you the knowledge. Worship gives you the application of that.

Without worship, your heart will, not might, will grow cold, callous, and hard. That's why you have a lot of people quoting Scripture but not living it because they don't worship. They're not worshipers.

They're not worshipping. They're not praying. And I know that hurts good.

I came to hurt tonight because I'm tired. I'm tired of people not seeing all that God has for them because they're allowing certain things to block that. As much as you read the Bible, you better be in worship.

If you've got an hour in the Bible, you better be an hour in prayer, an hour in worship. Because prayer and worship, that's like the fuel that flames that. Just reading alone, just me reading alone, I'm just hard and mean and stubborn still.

It's the worship that breaks me and breaks me and breaks me and breaks me. And then it comes another day. I need to be broken again.

I need to worship again. I need to worship again. This morning, I just kept listening to that song, Holy Spirit, you're welcome here.

Holy Spirit, you're welcome here. Holy Spirit, you're welcome in my heart. It took me 30 minutes to finally say, oh God, please just begin to work in my heart.

Yeah, I read the Bible and I love it. Thank God for that. But now I need the Bible to work in my heart.

And that's what worship does. So that's why we make this a big deal. It's because this is when the heart changes.

And that's why I'm not poking fun, but it's reality when people are just like this. Man, one more song. That line in In-N-Out Burger is going to be pretty long by now.

Panda Express sounds pretty good, but they're full. You guys, I don't know what to tell you, but you didn't get much out of the service. Because if this message doesn't propel you to worship, if it doesn't cause you to worship and pray, it falls on what the Bible calls deaf ears.

The hardness of heart. So that's what the whole point of this is to get you to worship and pray and seek God again. You marry those things, and you will watch your marriage come back together.

You will watch your relationship with the Lord come back together. You will watch things you never, that's impossible. Watch it come together through worship, the word, prayer coming together.

Let me close with that as Chelsea comes up. Lord, I just want to take a minute and pray for those who are discouraged tonight. Lord, encourage them through worship.

Lord, some of us have been living in a certain condition for years and years and years. Lord, we need you to break through in our hearts through worship tonight as we sing these final few songs. Lord, open our hearts.

Lord, we've got children who are walking away from you. We've got family members who are on their way to hell. Lord, there's too much at stake.

There's too much at stake to continue to play games as the enemy lulls us back to sleep. He gives us that cup of warm milk and puts us back down and we just go to sleep. But Lord, I pray that you would awaken tonight.

Awaken your sleeping church. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.

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