

Sermons  
New Testament  
Matthew  
13:24-30

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Date written: Feb. 5, 1949

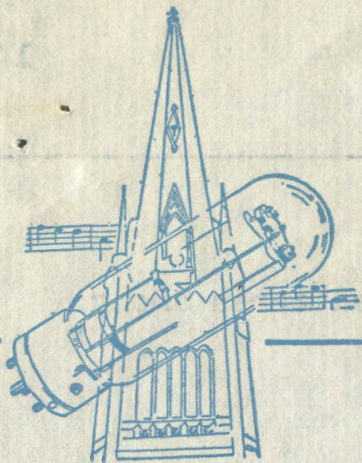
Text: Mt.13:25 -- "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."

Theme: Subtle sin.

Proposition: Wrong often creeps into our lives unnoticed.

Places preached:

Huntington, Ala., Feb. 6, 1949  
Cloverdale, Jordan, Ala., April 4, 54



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## Introduction:

### 1. Summary of Scripture story.

2. This story is meant to parallell ordinary Christian life. It is begun by these words: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed."

3. It is to follow the parallel to its application for us today that we spend our time here.

### I. Good seed are sown.

1. In the parable this was the first step.

2. In modern day life in farming operations planting of good seeds follows careful preparation of the ground, and is really the first major step in production of a crop. Planting good seed is the step without which not much crop can be grown or much profit shown. It must be good seed to prove profitable.

3. Symbolically speaking, the expectation of a fruitful life depends on good seed being sown. How often one hears it said of some person who drifts into crime, "What could one expect when you consider his family." How often we comment on the unhealthiness of a person, "No one could expect more when you remember how unhealthy his folks were." To produce good character or healthy bodies, good seed must be sown; good beginnings are necessary.

Parents may teach their children the great, Christian moral principles and thereby sow in them seed which may serve as the basis of a righteous and useful life. They may go the limit of their ability to provide a child with a healthy body and thereby prepare them that they may be able to bear heavy physical work and strain.

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II. Then Comes sleep.

1. In the parable the words are, "but while men slept," indicating that sleep is the natural follower of labor.

2. In present-day life this situation hasn't changed. A good, hard day's work still produces fatigue which demands sleep. Sleep and rest are the natural methods by which we recover from one session of work that we might enter another.

3. Symbolically, this holds true, seemingly, in the field of character development as well as in body life. We give all we can to an effort to prevent the sale of whiskey in our section of the country. The, the battle almost won, we have to ease our nerves and relax, forgetting the issue for a while. We use all our will power to control our tempers when something strikes us wrong. Then, the crisis having passed, we relax and find life easier. We use all our reasoning power to prevent ourselves from giving in to temptations which attract us strongly but which we know we should leave alone. Then, the struggle evidently won, we drop into less strenuous life for a while. Parents do all they can for their children. Then, to loosen the nerve tautness they turn to their own affairs and hobbies. In all of these cases we could say we sleep following the sowing of good seed.

III. While asleep, the enemy comes and sows tares.

1. That was the experience of the man in Jesus' parable. Weed seeds were sown among his good seed in order that the crop might be ruined. This all happened while the man slept the sleep of the weary.

2. In present-day farming operations that happens too, in a sense. Seldom now do actual human enemies sow bad seeds, but bad seed does get in. Weed seeds enter ground from having been left their the previous year by the parent plant; they are brought in by wind, animals, birds. Other enemies of a crop, besides bad seeds, are insects, birds

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and animals of various kinds. Some eat the seeds before they begin to grow. Others eat the first new plant shoots, or pull the young plants up and eat the germinated seed. Still others feed on the plant foliage, destroying it gradually.

3. While resting from the vigors of sowing good seed for character building, we, too, often let enemies in to destroy the good work, or at least to sow bad seed among the good. A boy has been brought up to think drinking and smoking wrong. Then, when first ~~went~~ from home, a group pounds into him again and again that they are his friends and he should do as they. That often means social drinking and smoking, use of bad language and shady jokes. Before he knows it, he has begun a crop of bad habits. Enemies have sown while he was asleep in the belief he is being befriended.

With a slightly different twist, this truth of enemies sowing while we sleep has furnished the plot for many a story of girls betrayed into shame; of men tricked into crime.

We see this most often in our own community where we let taking chances on prizes for "charitable causes" lead us into the habit of gambling; where we allow one slightly misused method to grow into a whole crop of sin.

#### IV. Extra work and effort are necessary to undo the bad done by the enemy.

1. In the parable, the master had to choose between pulling up the tares, or waiting till harvest and harvesting first the tares, then going back and harvesting the good grain. He chose this latter method. Double work was brought about by effort of the enemy.

2. In farming today, weeds growing up in a crop necessitate extra labor of getting them out.

3. In body building, once an enemy has done a successful job of sowing tares, the task of weeding them out is extra work. Until I acquired the habit of smoking, it was little effort to refuse a smoke. Then the ~~habit~~ <sup>seed</sup> of the smoking habit, introduced by enemies in the form of friends, crept in.

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When I decided to stop, the effort was great; and it is still difficult to refuse to smoke, after several years of not doing it. The work of rooting out bad seed or crops is much more than of just working where good seed has been sown.

Even harder to lose is the habit of drinking, or of immorality; of excessive spending (above one's income); or profanity; of unkind criticism of our neighbors. The easiest way to avoid these evils is never to start them. Once established, they are difficult to eradicate.

### Conclusion:

Wrong often creeps into our lives unnoticed. Sin is subtle.

By conscientiously searching for the principles of Christ in every issue, then courageously applying them we may keep the enemy and his bad seed out. But only then.

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