

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: The Mystery of the Mustard Seed
and the Devil's Dirty Birds

SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 13:31-32

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) In Matthew 13, there are seven parables.
 - i) These are the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - ii) These parables span history from the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ until the final judgment.
 - iii) They help us to understand what the course of this age will be like.
 - (1) They help us know what to expect so that we will not be taken by surprise.
 - (2) They help us know what to expect so that we will not be disappointed or have doubt come to us.
 - (a) Because things may not be as we think they ought to be.
- b) A parable is an earthly story that has a heavenly meaning.
 - i) The Parable of the Sower teaches us that not everyone who hears the Gospel will be saved.
 - (1) The sower may be fine.
 - (2) The seed may be fine.
 - (3) But it also depends upon the soil.
 - (a) Some seed will not fall on good ground, but some will.
 - ii) The Parable of the Tares shows us that weeds and wheat are sown together.
 - (1) This tells us that we can expect hypocrites in Christendom.
 - (a) In the church and out of the church, there will be hypocrites.
 - (b) Don't let a hypocrite keep you from giving your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c) Today's message will look at the story of the mustard seed.
 - i) Matthew 13:31-32
 - ii) We will learn from this why there are false cults in the world.
 - (1) Not only do we have those who reject and imitate the Gospel, but we also have those who actually pervert the Gospel.
- d) False cults did not take the Lord by surprise, and they should not take us by surprise.
 - i) This world is full of false cults and apostate Christians.
 - (1) There are many who trudge to church Sunday after Sunday whose lives are not changed.
 - (2) They are twice-fold the child of Hell because they are in false religion.
 - ii) This false religion may be dead and decadent, or it may be set on wildfire and zeal from Hell.
 - (1) But it is not Bible-based, it is not Christ-honoring, and it is not Spirit-filled.
- e) The devil has many ways to sabotage God's work.
 - i) In the Parable of the Sower, the devil catches away the seed that was sown.
 - ii) In the Parable of the Tares, he imitates the good seed.
 - iii) In the Parable of the Mustard Seed, he perverts and corrupts it.

- f) In today's message, we will look at the Parable of the Mustard Seed.
 - i) We will look at the sower, the seed, the shrub, and the shade tree.

- 2) THE SACRED SOWER (MATTHEW 13:31, 37)
 - a) Matthew 13:31
 - b) Who is the man who does the sowing in these parables?
 - i) Matthew 13:37
 - (1) He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.
 - c) The Lord Jesus was starting something.
 - i) He was planting a field.
 - d) The sower is the Son of Man, Jesus, because there will be a church.
 - i) Matthew 16:18
 - ii) Philippians 1:6
 - iii) There will be a godly crop.
 - (1) God has promised.
 - (2) He cannot fail; He must prevail.

- 3) THE SMALL SEED (MATTHEW 13:31-32)
 - a) This seed is very small.
 - i) It is like a fleck of pepper.
 - b) The smallness of the seed:
 - i) We are a little flock.
 - (1) We are the Master's minority.
 - (2) We are the faithful few.
 - ii) The Gospel is not something large and grand with a lot of fanfare.
 - (1) It is quite small in its simplicity.
 - (a) It is not so high and lofty that we cannot get up to it.
 - (2) It is so small that few get down to it.
 - iii) A great theologian once said that the greatest theological truth that he knew was, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."
 - c) The strength of the seed:
 - i) Matthew 17:20
 - ii) A mustard seed is fiery and pungent.
 - iii) There is a story about Darius the Great as he invaded Europe.
 - (1) He sent Alexander the Great a bag of thousands of sesame seeds.
 - (a) They were going to cover the land like those sesame seeds.
 - (i) There would be so many of them that Alexander the Great would never defeat them.
 - (2) Alexander the Great sent Darius back a bag of mustard seeds.
 - (a) Darius would meet fire, power, and strength like he had never known before.
 - iv) Not only does the mustard seed speak of smallness and insignificance, but it also speaks of strength.
 - d) The secret of the seed:

- i) The kingdom of Heaven is like a seed.
 - (1) A seed has life.
 - ii) The Lord frequently mentions seed.
 - (1) The Word of God is like a seed.
 - (a) Luke 8:11
 - (2) The good seed are the believers who are sown in the world.
 - (a) Matthew 13:38
 - iii) A seed has the germ of life in it.
 - (1) It can reproduce.
 - (2) Anyone can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed.
 - (a) A seed can reproduce and reproduce.
- 4) THE SIGNIFICANT SHRUB (MATTHEW 13:32)
- a) The seed begins to grow, and it becomes a shrub.
 - b) An herb is a bush that does not have a woody stem.
 - i) It has a pulpy stem, enough to support leaves, flowers, and seeds.
 - ii) It is not a great lofty thing like a tree, but it is a significant shrub.
 - c) This represents what the Gospel is supposed to be.
 - i) It may not seem like much compared to a great cedar of Lebanon or a mighty oak.
 - ii) But it is a shrub that can reproduce and bear whatever fruit, flowers, or seed that it is to bear.
 - d) It is not known for its prominence or its loftiness.
 - i) It speaks of lowliness.
- 5) A STRANGE SHADE TREE (MATTHEW 13:32)
- a) Shrubs don't become trees in the natural world.
 - i) Our Lord was talking about something that is monstrous.
 - (1) Something that is unnatural.
 - (2) Something that should not have developed.
 - (a) Herbs don't become trees.
 - b) Genesis 1:11-12
 - i) There is an herb that yields after its kind, and there is a tree that yields fruit after its kind.
 - (1) The herb does not produce a tree.
 - (a) Someone would never get a tree from an herb in the natural world.
 - (b) Stems of herbs never develop woody tissue.
 - c) The Lord was talking about something that was abnormal.
 - i) Don't read something normal into this.
 - ii) This is talking about strange developments, mysteries in the kingdom.
 - (1) It is not normal to have tares among wheat.
 - (a) A farmer does not expect that.
 - (2) Someone would not expect an herb to become a tree.

- iii) People who don't think straightly about these seven mysteries get confused.
 - (1) They say that it is wonderful that the Gospel starts from a little seed.
 - (a) It becomes a shrub.
 - (b) Then, the shrub becomes a great, big tree.
 - (i) And all the songbirds come and twitter in the branches of the Gospel tree.
 - 1. That is not what this parable is talking about.
 - 2. These are not sweet little birds that are in the limbs of this tree.
- d) Jesus did not explain this parable.
 - i) He explained the Parable of the Sower.
 - ii) He explained the Parable of the Tares.
 - (1) But He didn't explain this parable.
 - iii) He expected the people to have enough understanding of the Old Testament to understand what this parable is about.
- e) Daniel 4:20-22
 - i) Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar what his kingdom was like.
 - (1) Nebuchadnezzar was the king in Babylon.
 - (2) Babylon was the root of all false religion.
 - (a) It was begun by Nimrod whose name means "rebel".
 - (b) It began with the Tower of Babel.
 - (i) Genesis 11:1-10
 - (c) Babylon was the seedbed of all apostate religion from that time to now.
 - ii) Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was a type of antichrist.
 - (1) He typified this monstrous tree and the final form of apostate Christianity in the last days.
- f) The rise of false cults and liberal churches that deny the Bible are typified by this tree.
 - i) They have not taken the Lord by surprise.
 - (1) It is abnormal, but it is not unexpected.
- g) How do we know these are not just sweet little birds?
 - i) Matthew 13:32
 - (1) These birds are the ones that come and steal away the seed.
 - (a) Matthew 13:3-4
 - ii) Daniel said that the fowls were lurking in the Babylonian tree.
 - (1) Daniel 4:21
 - iii) Matthew 13:19
 - (1) The birds represent the devil, the wicked one.
 - (a) They don't represent sweet, little songbirds.
 - (b) These are the devil's dirty birds.
 - (i) They are lurking in the branches of apostate Christianity.
 - iv) Revelation 18:2

- (1) Babylon stands for false religion.
 - (a) Babylon was like a tree.
 - (i) The fowls lurked in the branches and in the shade of this tree.
- v) These are the devil's dirty birds that are in the shade of apostate Christianity.
 - (1) Satan is not against religion.
 - (a) He uses religion to accomplish his purpose.
- vi) In these parables, birds stand for that which steal away the seed.
 - (1) They stand for that which is apostate and that which is wrong.
- h) This tree is a monster tree.
 - i) Shrubs don't become trees.
 - ii) These dirty birds lurk in the branches of apostate Christianity.
 - (1) There is the compromiser, the liberal, the cult, and the blasphemer.
 - iii) False religion has the power of Satan behind it.
 - (1) Revelation 18:2
- i) These dirty birds are not easily spotted.
 - i) The devil is a master of deception and a master of camouflage.
 - (1) Matthew 7:15
- j) These dirty birds may do the following:
 - i) They may use the Bible.
 - (1) 2 Peter 3:16
 - (2) Just because a person says that he believes the Bible does not mean that he is not an apostate.
 - ii) They may perform miracles.
 - (1) Matthew 24:24
 - iii) They may appear to do good works.
 - (1) Matthew 7:22-23
 - iv) They may have Sunday schools and church services.
 - v) They may have revival services, Bible conferences, magazines, books, miracle-working power, a mission society, and youth activities.
 - (1) Counterfeits often look like the genuine thing.
- k) How will you know whether they are genuine or whether they are one of the devil's dirty birds?
 - i) There is the source test.
 - (1) Do they believe that the Bible, God's Holy Word, is the source of their information, or do they get it from someplace else?
 - (2) Revelation 22:18-19
 - (3) If they don't come from a Bible-based ministry, then we know that they are a false cult.
 - ii) There is the Savior test.
 - (1) What do they believe about Jesus Christ?
 - (a) Do they believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God and God the Son?

- (b) Do they believe that Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with Almighty God?
- (2) Do they worship Jesus?
 - (a) In the Bible, it is obvious that He is worshipped.
 - (b) If they don't worship Him, then they are not practicing Biblical faith.
- (3) 2 John 1:9-10
 - (a) This passage does not mean that you cannot bring him into your house to witness to him.
 - (b) To "receive" means to welcome him as a brother in Christ.
 - (i) We are not to receive him in this way.
- iii) There is the subject test.
 - (1) Is their primary task preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - (2) Do they understand what the true Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is?
 - (3) Galatians 1:8-9
- iv) There is the salvation test.
 - (1) Do they believe in salvation by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His atoning work on Calvary as the only basis for the forgiveness of sins?
 - (a) It is not the blood of Jesus plus anything.
 - (b) It is not faith plus works.
 - (c) It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the finished, atoning work of Calvary.
 - (2) Salvation is trusting the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Savior; receiving the gift of God, not any achievement.
 - (3) Are they depending on any achievement of their own for salvation, or are they trusting exclusively in the grace of God?
- v) There is the sanctification test.
 - (1) Do they live a righteous and holy life?
 - (2) Do they teach purity?
 - (3) Do they teach "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"?
 - (a) Hebrews 12:14
 - (4) Do they preach, teach, and live in accordance with the standard of holiness?
- vi) If a person can pass these tests, then we can say that we have a brother or sister in the Lord Jesus Christ.

6) CONCLUSION

- a) The sacred sower is the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus.
 - i) The one who plants the good seed will reap the harvest.
 - (1) We can be sure that there will be a harvest.
 - (2) The Lord will build His church.
- b) The small seed is the truth of God's Word.

- i) It may be small, but it is strong.
- ii) It has a secret.
 - (1) It pulsates with life, and it will reproduce.
- c) The shrub represents not a great lofty tree, but the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ that can reproduce over and over again.
 - i) It does not put its roots down deep because this world is not our home.
- d) The tree represents apostate Christianity.
 - i) Daniel 4:20-22
 - ii) Revelation 18:2
 - iii) The very parable itself teaches that these dirty birds that have been stealing away the seed, come and find haven and rest in the branches of this tree.
- e) What does this mean to you personally?
 - i) It is a word of warning.
 - (1) Don't get carried away by some false cult and apostate Christianity.
 - (2) Many people who were once in Bible-believing churches are drawn aside because they do not have the ability to be a spiritual bird watcher.
 - (a) Matthew 7:15
 - ii) It is a word of comfort.
 - (1) You don't have anything to fear from the cults.
 - (2) You don't have anything to fear from apostate Christianity.
 - (3) Truth is stronger than error.
 - (4) 1 John 4:4
 - (5) What we must fear is our own missionary apathy, lethargy, and ignorance of spiritual truth.
 - (a) We must fear our failure to preach the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - (6) We have a bag full of seed, and Satan is the one who should be afraid.
- f) It is obvious in these parables that you can hear the Word of God and not receive the good seed.
 - i) You can be like weeds among wheat.
 - (1) You can be one of Satan's tares rather than God's shaft of golden wheat.
 - ii) There are those who seem to imitate Christianity but are in false cults and are not truly in the kingdom of God.
- g) Would you like to be saved?
 - i) This is not asking if you are religious.
 - (1) The devil is religious.
 - ii) 2 Corinthians 13:5
 - iii) If you were to stand before God right now and He were to ask you why He should let you into Heaven, what would you say?
 - (1) Why don't you get it settled right now.
 - (a) Don't let the devil's dirty birds steal away the seed.

- h) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- i) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16