**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | The Strange Mystery of the Counterfeit Christian |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Matthew 13:24-30, 37-40 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2042 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Not everybody who claims to be a Christian is a genuine Christian.
      1. Dr. Vance Havner said that too many church members have been starched and ironed, but they have never been washed.
         1. They have never come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.
   2. Today’s message will help us in a three-fold way:
      1. It will give us a word of comfort.
         1. Many people are confused and bewildered when they see so much hypocrisy, many false cults, and much that parades under the banner of Christendom that is not real or genuine.
            1. They think that perhaps the whole thing has gone wrong.

For them, there is comfort.

* + 1. It will give us a word of warning.
       1. There are many who are not true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who perhaps think that they are saved.
          1. But they are lost and need to be warned.
          2. They need to be brought to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
    2. It will give us a word of instruction.
       1. It will tell us how to deal with and how to think about these people who are counterfeit Christians.
  1. A parable is an earthly story that has a heavenly meaning.
     1. The Lord would tell a story, then He would give a very special meaning.
        1. It would be a double application.
           1. The natural story and then the hidden meaning.
     2. These parables were not only given to reveal, but they were also given to conceal.
  2. This was the first time that Jesus spoke in parables.
     1. Rebellion against Him was at its zenith.
        1. They accused Him of having a devil.
        2. Jesus had to warn them about an unpardonable sin.
        3. Then, He began to speak with parables.
           1. Matthew 13:11-12
  3. Jesus gave seven parables, and the second parable is the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.
     1. Matthew 13:24-30
     2. The story is simply that a man planted wheat in a field, an enemy came while the husbandman or the farmer was asleep, and he sowed weed seed or tares among the wheat.
        1. This crop of weeds looked at first very similar to wheat.
        2. It was very hard to discern the wheat from the tares.
           1. The enemy knew this.
  4. There are seven elements in this parable:
     1. The man who does the sowing is Jesus Christ Himself.
        1. Matthew 13:37
           1. Son of Man is a term that Jesus Christ used frequently to describe Himself.
     2. The seed that He sows are true believers.
        1. Don’t confuse the seed in this parable (the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares) with the Parable of the Sower.
           1. In the Parable of the Sower, the seed is the Word of God.
           2. In this parable, the seed are true believers.
           3. In the Parable of the Sower, the soil is the hearts of man.
           4. In this parable, the soil is the world.
        2. While the Lord is planting true believers, the enemy is planting false believers.
        3. The true believers are called the seed.
           1. Genesis 3:15

The Lord said this to Satan in judgment.

There is the seed of the woman, which is the good seed.

There is the seed of the serpent.

The good seed is what the Lord Jesus Christ plants in the world.

In this world, there will be constant warfare between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

* + - * 1. True believers are those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

Those who are truly twice-born.

* + 1. The field is the world.
       1. Matthew 13:38
          1. This is not talking about the church, but about the world in general.
       2. In this world, there are saved people and unsaved people.
       3. There are some unsaved people who appear to be saved people.
          1. They are counterfeit Christians in the world.
    2. The enemy who has sown these false Christians alongside the true believers is Satan.
       1. Matthew 13:39
    3. The tares, therefore, are the children of the devil.
       1. Matthew 13:38
       2. Sometimes, people will talk about the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man.
          1. We may be brothers and sisters in our humanity, but we are not spiritual brothers and sisters.

Not everybody is a child of God.

* + - 1. Jesus said to the Pharisees, the counterfeit believers of His day, “*You are of your father the devil*.”
         1. John 8:44
    1. The reapers who will reap the harvest are the angels.
       1. Matthew 13:39
    2. The end of the age is the time of the reaping.
       1. This is when the reaping will be done.
       2. Matthew 13:40
  1. The seven parables that our Lord gave span the entire history of the Christian church because the one who sows the seed is the Lord Jesus Christ.
     1. He began His ministry sowing good seed.
     2. These parables go all the way to the end of the age.
        1. Here, our Lord is unfolding the mystery of religious history.
  2. In today’s message, we will look at the tares under three simple headings:
     1. The sowing of the tares
     2. The growing of the tares
     3. The knowing of the tares

1. the sowing of the tares (matthew 13:39)
   1. It is the work of Satan.
      1. Satan is a counterfeiter.
      2. He is a pervert.
      3. He is the enemy who has done this.
   2. The devil is not opposed to religion.
      1. Religion is his chief tool.
   3. Why did he do it?
      1. One translation translates this as “*an envious person has done this*.”
      2. What the devil is truly interested in is not weeds or wheat but worship.
      3. He wants false believers.
      4. The devil is the chief counterfeiter of religion.
         1. The best counterfeit seems most like the real.
            1. The more like the real, the better the counterfeit.
            2. That is the reason our Lord, the master teacher, chose this parable.

Wheat and tares, especially at the first, look so much alike.

* 1. There are seven false things that are the work of Satan in the world today:
     1. There is a false Jesus.
        1. If someone comes to you and says that they believe in Jesus, then find out which Jesus they believe in.
           1. Find out if they believe in the true Jesus.
        2. 2 Corinthians 11:4
        3. Even demons will bear the name of Jesus.
     2. There is a false spirit.
        1. 2 Corinthians 11:4
        2. Some will say that they had a spiritual experience.
           1. They may have had an encounter with the devil.
        3. 1 John 4:1
     3. There are false ministers.
        1. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
           1. They have not been called.
           2. They have appointed themselves.
        2. When we look for the devil, never fail to look in the pulpit.
     4. This false Jesus, false Spirit, and false ministers produce false brothers.
        1. 2 Corinthians 11:26
           1. Paul had to contend with counterfeit Christians (false brothers).
     5. They have a false gospel.
        1. Galatians 1:6-9
           1. It is another gospel, but it is not truly the Gospel.

There is only one true Gospel.

* + - * 1. The thing that the devil wants to pervert more than anything else is the Gospel of Christ.
        2. “*Let him be accursed*” in this passage literally means “*let him be condemned*”.
      1. These false apostles with their false gospel may seem to do some good.
         1. They may clothe the naked.
         2. They may house the homeless.
         3. They may feed the hungry.
         4. They may be against abortion.
         5. A counterfeit bill can do a lot of good.

It can buy clothes.

It can buy groceries.

It can buy gasoline.

But it will not pass the bank examiner.

* + - 1. A false Christian may do these things, and people will say that he is doing good.
         1. But there is coming a day when he will face the examination of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:21

* + 1. Don’t let some counterfeit Christian keep you out of Heaven.
       1. A hypocrite is not an argument against Christianity.
       2. A hypocrite is a wonderful argument in favor of Christianity.
          1. People don’t counterfeit gum wrappers; they counterfeit hundred-dollar bills.

They don’t counterfeit that which is worthless.

They counterfeit that which is worthwhile.

* + - 1. Every counterfeit Christian, every false Christian, is a testimony to the good, the worth, and the reality of the real.
    1. Don’t let hypocrites keep you from becoming a Christian.
       1. Would you stop eating wheat bread because there are some tares in the world?
          1. That would be just as foolish as deciding not to go to church or serve the Lord because there are some hypocritical Christians.
       2. One of the twelve apostles was a hypocrite.
    2. Don’t be dismayed.
       1. Hypocrites, counterfeit Christians, a false Jesus, a false Spirit, false apostles and ministers, false brethren, and a false gospel have not taken God by surprise.
          1. They don’t prove what we believe not to be true.
          2. They are proof of what we believe is true.

People counterfeit that which is worthwhile.

* + - 1. The Bible says that this is exactly what will be till the end of the age.
  1. When did the enemy do this?
     1. Matthew 13:25
        1. It happens because those of us who are a part of the Kingdom of the redeemed sometimes are asleep.
        2. He did this while we slept.
     2. 1 Corinthians 15:34
        1. There are those who are being led astray because we have not been awake to righteousness.
     3. Too many sermons are like a lullaby to put people to sleep rather than an alarm clock to wake them up.
     4. It could be that some of your loved ones are going to be the devil’s tares because of your dullness and your drowsiness.
     5. We need to sound an alarm.
  2. Galatians 4:16
     1. Sometimes, we are out to win popularity contests instead of telling the truth.
  3. The enemy sows the tares among the wheat because people are asleep.
     1. They don’t sound the alarm as we should sound the alarm.

1. the growing of the tares (matthew 13:28-30)
   1. Our job today is not rooting out weeds.
      1. Every now and then, somebody wants to go on a crusade against false religions.
         1. That is not our job.
      2. We can warn people; we can preach the truth.
         1. But it is not our assignment to try to root out or to stamp out false religion.
            1. If we do, then we will do more harm than good.

When we try to stamp out a fire, all we do is scatter the embers.

* + 1. Never join a movement to persecute someone because of their faith.
       1. We are to preach the truth.
       2. We are to stand for the truth.
       3. These people are accountable to God.
          1. God is the one who will judge them.
    2. If we try to judge them, we will do far more damage than we will do good.
    3. We may just root out some wheat while we are trying to root out the tares.
  1. This is not talking about discipline in the church.
     1. Every church is to exercise discipline.
     2. The discipline in the church is not primarily to root out and remove but to reclaim and restore.
     3. Sometimes, people have to be removed from a local church fellowship.
        1. But that is not what this parable is talking about.
           1. This parable is about wheat and weeds in the world.

The field is the world.

Our job is to preach the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

* 1. Be careful not to spend your money to fertilize weeds.
     1. Put your money behind good, Bible-believing, Christ-honoring proof.
     2. Sometimes, people have no idea that what they are doing is subsidizing and underwriting the devil’s enterprise.
     3. One reason why it is good to give through the local church is because then you know where your money is going.
     4. Be a part of something that you know is real.
        1. Don’t fertilize weeds.
  2. Matthew 13:30

1. the knowing of the weeds (matthew 13:40-43)
   1. There is coming a time when the weeds and wheat will be discerned.
      1. A harvest is coming.
   2. Why does God tolerate tares?
      1. Neither the wheat nor the tares are ripe until the end of the age.
         1. Revelations 14:14-15
            1. In this passage, the John was given a vision of the final judgment.
            2. A sickle is used to reap wheat and tares.
      2. A person’s harvest does not end when he dies.
         1. The harvest goes on and on.
         2. His life is not mature.
            1. His influence will go on and on.

He corrupts someone who will corrupt someone else who will corrupt someone else, and so forth.

* + - 1. It will not be over until the end of the age.
         1. Until God puts the last period upon the last sentence upon the last paragraph of the last page of the last book of the last volume of history.
         2. When it is over, then God gathers the evidence.
    1. The same thing is true with a righteous person.
       1. Their influence for God will go on and on after they die.
       2. God said of Abel, “*He being dead yet speaketh*.”
          1. Hebrews 11:4
    2. God does not judge at this time because it is too early to judge.
  1. Here is the point of this parable:
     1. Don’t let the slowness of God’s judgment deceive you.
     2. The judgment is coming.
  2. The tares are gathered into bundles to be burned.
     1. Matthew 13:30
     2. In the world, the unsaved people seem to be gathering together.
        1. They’re all joining; they are merging.
        2. This unity is not necessarily something that will be a great blessing to them.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. Make certain of your salvation.
      1. If there is a false Jesus, if there is a false spirit, if there are false brethren, false ministers, and a false gospel, then has the devil played a trick on you?
         1. He would just as soon send you to Hell from the church pew than from the gutter.
      2. 2 Corinthians 13:5
      3. A person is not saved because their Sunday school teacher or their parents told them that they are saved.
         1. Examine yourself; prove your own faith.
         2. Do you have a Bible reason, if you were to stand before God right now, to say that you know that you are saved?
            1. This is not asking if you know the plan of salvation.

Do you know the Man of salvation?

Is Jesus Christ in you?

* 1. If you have never given your heart to Jesus Christ, then don’t let a counterfeit Christian keep you out of Heaven.
     1. Don’t hide behind a hypocrite.
     2. Don’t think that the true is not real because the false is there.
  2. If you are a counterfeit Christian, then repent of that and receive Christ and Him only as your Lord and Savior.
  3. Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save.
     1. John 3:17
     2. Luke 19:10
  4. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
  5. 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.
     1. Romans 3:23
     2. Romans 10:9-10
     3. Romans 10:13
     4. Acts 16:31
     5. John 3:16