

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE:	The Strange Mystery of the Counterfeit Christian
SERMON REFERENCE:	Matthew 13:24-30, 37-40
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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Not everybody who claims to be a Christian is a genuine Christian.
 - i) 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.
- b) Today's message will help us in a three-fold way:
 - i) 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.
 - (a) They think that perhaps the whole thing has gone wrong.
 - (i) For them, there is comfort.
 - ii) 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.
 - (a) But they are lost and need to be warned.
 - (b) They need to be brought to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - iii) 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.
- c) A parable is an earthly story that has a heavenly meaning.
 - i) The Lord would tell a story, then He would give a very special meaning.
 - (1) It would be a double application.
 - (a) The natural story and then the hidden meaning.
 - ii) These parables were not only given to reveal, but they were also given to conceal.
- d) This was the first time that Jesus spoke in parables.
 - i) 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.
 - (a) Matthew 13:11-12
- e) Jesus gave seven parables, and the second parable is the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.
 - i) Matthew 13:24-30
 - ii) 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.
 - (a) The enemy knew this.
- f) There are seven elements in this parable:
 - i) The man who does the sowing is Jesus Christ Himself.

- (1) Matthew 13:37
 - (a) Son of Man is a term that Jesus Christ used frequently to describe Himself.
- ii) 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.
 - (a) In the Parable of the Sower, the seed is the Word of God.
 - (b) In this parable, the seed are true believers.
 - (c) In the Parable of the Sower, the soil is the hearts of man.
 - (d) 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.
 - (a) Genesis 3:15
 - (i) The Lord said this to Satan in judgment.
 - (ii) There is the seed of the woman, which is the good seed.
 - (iii) There is the seed of the serpent.
 - (iv) The good seed is what the Lord Jesus Christ plants in the world.
 - (v) In this world, there will be constant warfare between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.
 - (b) True believers are those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.
 - (i) Those who are truly twice-born.
- iii) The field is the world.
 - (1) Matthew 13:38
 - (a) 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.
 - (a) They are counterfeit Christians in the world.
- iv) The enemy who has sown these false Christians alongside the true believers is Satan.
 - (1) Matthew 13:39
- v) 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.
 - (a) We may be brothers and sisters in our humanity, but we are not spiritual brothers and sisters.
 - (i) Not everybody is a child of God.
 - (3) Jesus said to the Pharisees, the counterfeit believers of His day, "*You are of your father the devil.*"
 - (a) John 8:44
- vi) The reapers who will reap the harvest are the angels.
 - (1) Matthew 13:39

- vii) The end of the age is the time of the reaping.
 - (1) This is when the reaping will be done.
 - (2) Matthew 13:40
 - g) 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.
 - i) He began His ministry sowing good seed.
 - ii) These parables go all the way to the end of the age.
 - (1) Here, our Lord is unfolding the mystery of religious history.
 - h) In today's message, we will look at the tares under three simple headings:
 - i) The sowing of the tares
 - ii) The growing of the tares
 - iii) The knowing of the tares
- 2) THE SOWING OF THE TARES (MATTHEW 13:39)
- a) It is the work of Satan.
 - i) Satan is a counterfeiter.
 - ii) He is a pervert.
 - iii) He is the enemy who has done this.
 - b) The devil is not opposed to religion.
 - i) Religion is his chief tool.
 - c) Why did he do it?
 - i) One translation translates this as "*an envious person has done this.*"
 - ii) What the devil is truly interested in is not weeds or wheat but worship.
 - iii) He wants false believers.
 - iv) The devil is the chief counterfeiter of religion.
 - (1) The best counterfeit seems most like the real.
 - (a) The more like the real, the better the counterfeit.
 - (b) That is the reason our Lord, the master teacher, chose this parable.
 - (i) Wheat and tares, especially at the first, look so much alike.
 - d) There are seven false things that are the work of Satan in the world today:
 - i) 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.
 - (a) Find out if they believe in the true Jesus.
 - (2) 2 Corinthians 11:4
 - (3) Even demons will bear the name of Jesus.
 - ii) There is a false spirit.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 11:4
 - (2) Some will say that they had a spiritual experience.
 - (a) They may have had an encounter with the devil.
 - (3) 1 John 4:1
 - iii) There are false ministers.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
 - (a) They have not been called.

- (b) They have appointed themselves.
- (2) When we look for the devil, never fail to look in the pulpit.
- iv) This false Jesus, false Spirit, and false ministers produce false brothers.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 11:26
 - (a) Paul had to contend with counterfeit Christians (false brothers).
- v) They have a false gospel.
 - (1) Galatians 1:6-9
 - (a) It is another gospel, but it is not truly the Gospel.
 - (i) There is only one true Gospel.
 - (b) The thing that the devil wants to pervert more than anything else is the Gospel of Christ.
 - (c) “*Let him be accursed*” in this passage literally means “*let him be condemned*”.
 - (2) These false apostles with their false gospel may seem to do some good.
 - (a) They may clothe the naked.
 - (b) They may house the homeless.
 - (c) They may feed the hungry.
 - (d) They may be against abortion.
 - (e) A counterfeit bill can do a lot of good.
 - (i) It can buy clothes.
 - (ii) It can buy groceries.
 - (iii) It can buy gasoline.
 - (iv) But it will not pass the bank examiner.
 - (3) A false Christian may do these things, and people will say that he is doing good.
 - (a) But there is coming a day when he will face the examination of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (i) Matthew 7:21
- vi) 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.
 - (a) People don't counterfeit gum wrappers; they counterfeit hundred-dollar bills.
 - (i) They don't counterfeit that which is worthless.
 - (ii) They counterfeit that which is worthwhile.
 - (3) Every counterfeit Christian, every false Christian, is a testimony to the good, the worth, and the reality of the real.
- vii) 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?
 - (a) 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.
- viii) 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.
 - (a) They don't prove what we believe not to be true.
 - (b) They are proof of what we believe is true.
 - (i) People counterfeit that which is worthwhile.
 - (2) The Bible says that this is exactly what will be till the end of the age.
 - e) When did the enemy do this?
 - i) 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.
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 15:34
 - (1) There are those who are being led astray because we have not been awake to righteousness.
 - iii) Too many sermons are like a lullaby to put people to sleep rather than an alarm clock to wake them up.
 - iv) It could be that some of your loved ones are going to be the devil's tares because of your dullness and your drowsiness.
 - v) We need to sound an alarm.
 - f) Galatians 4:16
 - i) Sometimes, we are out to win popularity contests instead of telling the truth.
 - g) The enemy sows the tares among the wheat because people are asleep.
 - i) They don't sound the alarm as we should sound the alarm.
- 3) THE GROWING OF THE TARES (MATTHEW 13:28-30)
- a) Our job today is not rooting out weeds.
 - i) Every now and then, somebody wants to go on a crusade against false religions.
 - (1) That is not our job.
 - ii) 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.
 - (a) If we do, then we will do more harm than good.
 - (i) When we try to stamp out a fire, all we do is scatter the embers.
 - iii) 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.
 - (a) God is the one who will judge them.
 - iv) If we try to judge them, we will do far more damage than we will do good.
 - v) We may just root out some wheat while we are trying to root out the tares.

- b) This is not talking about discipline in the church.
 - i) Every church is to exercise discipline.
 - ii) The discipline in the church is not primarily to root out and remove but to reclaim and restore.
 - iii) Sometimes, people have to be removed from a local church fellowship.
 - (1) But that is not what this parable is talking about.
 - (a) This parable is about wheat and weeds in the world.
 - (i) The field is the world.
 - (ii) Our job is to preach the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - c) Be careful not to spend your money to fertilize weeds.
 - i) Put your money behind good, Bible-believing, Christ-honoring proof.
 - ii) Sometimes, people have no idea that what they are doing is subsidizing and underwriting the devil's enterprise.
 - iii) One reason why it is good to give through the local church is because then you know where your money is going.
 - iv) Be a part of something that you know is real.
 - (1) Don't fertilize weeds.
 - d) Matthew 13:30
- 4) THE KNOWING OF THE WEEDS (MATTHEW 13:40-43)
- a) There is coming a time when the weeds and wheat will be discerned.
 - i) A harvest is coming.
 - b) Why does God tolerate tares?
 - i) Neither the wheat nor the tares are ripe until the end of the age.
 - (1) Revelations 14:14-15
 - (a) In this passage, the John was given a vision of the final judgment.
 - (b) A sickle is used to reap wheat and tares.
 - ii) A person's harvest does not end when he dies.
 - (1) The harvest goes on and on.
 - (2) His life is not mature.
 - (a) His influence will go on and on.
 - (i) He corrupts someone who will corrupt someone else who will corrupt someone else, and so forth.
 - (3) It will not be over until the end of the age.
 - (a) 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.
 - (b) When it is over, then God gathers the evidence.
 - iii) 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.*"
 - (a) Hebrews 11:4
 - iv) God does not judge at this time because it is too early to judge.

- c) Here is the point of this parable:
 - i) Don't let the slowness of God's judgment deceive you.
 - ii) The judgment is coming.
- d) The tares are gathered into bundles to be burned.
 - i) Matthew 13:30
 - ii) 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.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) Make certain of your salvation.
 - i) 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.
 - ii) 2 Corinthians 13:5
 - iii) 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?
 - (a) This is not asking if you know the plan of salvation.
 - (i) Do you know the Man of salvation?
 - (ii) Is Jesus Christ in you?
- b) If you have never given your heart to Jesus Christ, then don't let a counterfeit Christian keep you out of Heaven.
 - i) Don't hide behind a hypocrite.
 - ii) Don't think that the true is not real because the false is there.
- c) If you are a counterfeit Christian, then repent of that and receive Christ and Him only as your Lord and Savior.
- d) Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save.
 - i) John 3:17
 - ii) Luke 19:10
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) 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