

THE HIDDEN GLORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

From Matthew 13:24-42

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INTRODUCTION

1. Illustration: According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2009)¹:

27%	Admit to texting while driving
22%	Fatal accidents among under 20's involved cell use
24%	Fatal accidents among 30-39 yo involved cell use

Transition: Whether it be cell phone use while driving, smoking, a poor diet, or not getting vaccinated, Humans are prone to underestimate all sorts of real dangers. As a result, we incur more injury, experience greater loss, and even die sooner. I don't mean to be too grim, but it's true. The same goes for underestimating the good something small can do (think 401k and retirement funds).

We all have a tendency to underestimate things in our lives that could have dramatic effect on our lives simply because they *seem* small or insignificant at the time.

Jesus' contemporaries did the same thing when they considered the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus preached. If your kingdom is so great, why aren't you 'winning'? If the Pharisees are as bad as you and John the Baptist say they are, why are they still here? Why not just get rid of all the nasty, bad stuff right now?

What's so great about your Kingdom, anyway?

And if we're honest, we would have had the same objections. Perhaps you have the same objections today.

The Scriptures we'll be considering this am affirm the truth that the Kingdom of Heaven isn't just 'great;' it's glorious. Even so, its full glory, for now, is being concealed. It's hidden. And it's being kept hidden on purpose.

This morning, I believe that God does not simply want us to be aware of the Kingdom's hidden glory, He wants us to live rightly in response to it.

2. Proposition: **Since the hidden glory of the Kingdom of God will one day be revealed, persevere with patience wherever God has planted you.**

BODY: What is the "hidden glory" of the Kingdom of God according to these three parables? Three parts:

1. Its delayed victory over the world (13:24-30, 36-43)
 - a. Last week, we learned about the varied responses to the Kingdom of Heaven through the parable of the sower. Only one type of soil is receptive to the preaching of the message of the kingdom. The other three eventually reject it. Though this is the case, the questions arise: (1) "what happens to those folks?" and (2) "what role do the faithful play in a world full of bad-soil-folk?"
 - b. It's important to remember that the disciples and broader Jewish community had very good reason to believe that the coming of God's Kingdom = immediate judgment on bad-soil-folk. Consider:

Isaiah 11:3-5	[Read from Bible]
Ezekiel 20:34, 38	"I will bring you out from the peoples... with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, and with wrath... I will purge out the rebels from among you."
Matt. 3:11-12	"The chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

What these verses show us quite clearly is that there seems to be a very close (chronologically) connection between the messiah's coming (and by extension the rule of God) and judgment against evil. So it was perfectly reasonable for the disciples and even the religious leaders to underestimate the Kingdom Jesus was preaching.

It is within this framework that Jesus puts another parable before them. [Read 24-30] Comments:

- (1) What is darnel? [darnel pic]

¹ <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/811379>

- (2) Why would someone sow darnel?
- (3) Emphasis: delayed separation for the good of the wheat

No let's jump down to verse 36 so we can get a better hold on this parable before talking the middle chunk. [Read 36-43].

Seed sower	Son of Man (Jesus)
Field	The world
Good seed	Sons of the kingdom
Weeds	Sons of the evil one
Harvest	End of the age
Reapers	Angels
Servants/slaves	Jesus' disciples/the church (?)
Gathering of the weeds	Gathering out of all stumbling blocks and lawless people to be burned

One commentator suggest that in using this illustration, Jesus invites us to reflect on the relative permanence of Jesus' Kingdom and read the birds nesting as a symbolic representation of the nations who would one day be included into God's Kingdom.²

- iii. Like a mustard seed, the Kingdom of Heaven may seem small and insignificant. Hidden even. BUT in time will out reach, out last, and out-benefit its constituents in ways no kingdom ever has or ever will. Don't underestimate this Kingdom. Don't underestimate its hidden glory.

3. Its definite effect on the world (13:33-35)

- a. What is leaven? [Leaven pic] – Yeast (actually sourdough) is a living organism (a fungus, actually) that makes CO2 and alcohol as it metabolizes sugars. This gives leavened bread its airiness and part of its yummy taste
- b. What's the point?
 - i. The emphasis here is the leaven's hiddenness and effect on a large batch of dough. Any baker can tell you, "a little yeast goes a long way."
 - ii. Like leaven, the Kingdom (again) appearing small and insignificant, in time will have a definitive and irreversible (yet beneficial) mark on its surroundings. Isn't that what the church is all about?
 - iii. Don't underestimate the Kingdom. Church, don't underestimate or undersell the potential of our impact in our communities.

c. What's the point?

- i. Judgment is coming
- ii. Judgment has been **delegated** for the good of the wheat (we're bad world-judges). "God didn't call the church to judge the world" (John Mac)
- iii. Judgment has been **delayed** for the good of the wheat (we're all tares to begin with!). He's planted us **among evil** for a reason. Be patient with the evil around us.
- iv. Don't underestimate the Kingdom! It's glorious triumph is coming. Slow down. Be patient. We're woefully under qualified to be enacting God's judgment, anyway. The tares wont win the day. They will not pollute the glorious grain. The kingdom will be victorious over the world.

2. Its dramatic transformation within the world (13:31-32)

- a. What is a mustard seed? [mustard seed/tree pic]
- b. What's the point?
 - i. Emphasis is on the dramatic transformation the seed undergoes AND the benefit it provides to the birds who nest in its branches
 - ii. Likely a reference to Neb.'s vision in Daniel 4 that likened the stretch of his kingdom to a tree's reach.

SO WHAT? "He who has ears, let him hear."

Though the Kingdom's victory, transformation, and effect are certain, it will be brought about through the patient perseverance of God's people planted around the world.

- 1. Beware of underestimating the Kingdom of Heaven
- 2. Be honest with yourself, are you a wheat or a tare/darnel? This am God invites you to behold the hidden glory of His kingdom surrender your life to it wholly and fully. By this we are transformed

² R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICONT (2007), 527.

3. For you Wheaties, don't be discouraged by the evil in our world.
We're not supposed to retreat from it, nor are we called to eliminate who we *think* are the tares. The judgment of the world is God's alone.
4. You've been planted in this wicked world, be patient and persevere where God has planted you.