

Just Wait and See

Matthew 13:24-43 - NCBC, June 21, 2020

Main Point: **God's kingdom is better than what we can see now.**

- What seems messy now, will eventually shine in purity (24-30, 36-43)
 - The wheat is true believers, the “sons of the kingdom”
 - The weeds are all unbelievers, the “sons of the evil one”
 - The field is the world
 - The harvest is judgment, the “end of the age”
 - Our mission is not to root out others' evil. Now is the time to evangelize, not judge, sinners.
 - God will perfectly judge the wicked and reward the righteous at the end.
- What seems small now, will eventually shelter all nations (31-32)
 - The life inside a small seed benefits many birds' lives
 - The power of God inside small beginnings has global impact
 - God's reign will never fail, but will ultimately overcome all evil
- What seems invisible now, will eventually transform all nations (33)
 - The life inside a batch of yeast benefits all the dough
 - By the power of God's Spirit, His kingdom will grow
 - God's reign will never fail, but will ultimately overcome all evil

Application: **Trust in the eternal purposes of God (34-35)**

- God is not “out of control”
- God will ultimately right all wrongs and rule on earth
- Listen carefully, and live by faith, not sight (43b)

Opening Announcements:

- **Remember to visit mynCBC.org** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of careful regathering.
- **This Weds, June 24th, at 6:30pm** we have another Wednesday Worship Gathering! All are invited to come for this thought-provoking presentation on “The Heart of Racism” by Matt Miller and Cameron Dobbins. Attendees will spread out in the Intersection Building's large Assembly Room. Masks are optional for this event.
- **Discovering Church Membership - Saturday, June 27th, 9am – Noon** in the South Classroom of the Main Building. Come learn the joys of formal membership at New Castle Bible Church!

<<Christ our Hope in Life and Death>>



Good morning church! What good news we have just sung together: *Jesus our hope in life and death*. There is no greater life on earth or throughout all of eternity than life in Christ. May the Spirit of Christ deepen our understanding of that glorious truth through our worship of Him this morning.

Today we continue our study of the Kingdom Parables found in **Matthew chapter 13**. So please open your Bible and prepare to read from **Matthew 13:24-43**.

If you're joining us online, we are so thankful to worship with you! Please notice the links alongside this livestream offer fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the preaching manuscript, and children's coloring pages to assist your worship. At any time you may pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

For those distributed onsite today, again thank you for your patience and flexibility as we continue to navigate this unique ministry season. Thank you for helping us make the local church one of the safest communities for the weakest of people. Your kind cooperation and fervent prayers are very much appreciated.

This morning we consider 3 parables that encourage our faith when evil seems to be winning. Remember, these parables about the Kingdom of Heaven were all taught on the same day when Israel officially rejected Jesus as their Messiah.¹ So Jesus was now using stories from everyday life to reveal and conceal further truths about His reign and rule as God's anointed King.

All three of these parables invite us to *Just Wait and See* how Jesus will accomplish His kingly reign on earth. These are timely Scriptures for us this morning, so as you are able, please stand with me with humble and teachable hearts in honor of the public reading of Scripture. I'm reading from **Matthew 13, verses 24-43**, in the ESV:

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' ²⁸ He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

³¹ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

³⁴ All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. ³⁵ This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

¹ Matthew 13:1; the rejection happened in Matthew 12:24, often referred to
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as "the unpardonable sin."

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

This is God’s Word.

Let’s Pray Together.

Do you ever get overwhelmed by this world’s evil? As you look around at the raging hatred ... and all you see is our world spiraling downward into greater depravity and evil, do you ever wonder what Jesus is thinking? Do you ever question if God is really still in control? After all, if God really reigns, wouldn’t He end all the evil, silence all opposition, and defeat Satan forever?

Today’s Scripture whispers God’s reply, “Be patient my child... Just Wait and See.”

² Matthew 16:18
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We are a lot like Jesus’ first followers who were listening to these parables. They were also troubled. Israel’s evil leaders had just rejected Jesus as their king, determined to keep Jews outside of God’s rule!

And so Jesus tells these 3 stories to say, “Just wait and see.” Yes Satan is opposing God’s kingdom, and most people do reject God’s rule...but just wait and see that God’s kingdom will survive in spite of all its present opposition.

Don’t lose heart! Jesus promised to build His church so even the gates of hell cannot stand against His sovereign grace.² Greater is He who is in us, than he who is in the world.³

Therefore, these three parables offer a timely reminder that,



God’s kingdom is far better off than what we can see now. Jesus wants His followers living between His first and second comings to be patient.

³ 1 John 4:4

Yes, Jesus' reign on earth was initially rejected by the very people God sent Him to rule over. Yes, Satan is an active enemy who is working overtime to try to destroy all who submit to Jesus' lordship today.⁴ Yes, as we learned from the first parable in **Matthew 13**, the majority of those who profess to be Christians are not truly born again.⁵

But God's kingdom is better than what we can see now.

You'll notice each parable starts the same way: *The kingdom of heaven is like... or the kingdom of heaven may be compared to...* So these stories explain Jesus' kingdom. And when you hear kingdom – don't think a place or a palace. Think of the King and His reign. For the kingdom of heaven refers to wherever Jesus rules and reigns.

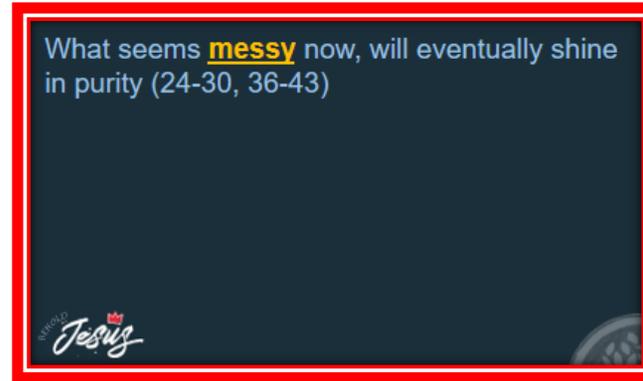
Someday Jesus will return to establish a physical kingdom on earth.⁶ But now – between His first and second comings – the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual reign – wherever God rules and exercises His sovereign authority.

Today the kingdom of heaven is most clearly seen in the local church. Because on the earth the church consists of all who claim to be submitted to Christ's rule and reign.

So first, the parable of the weeds in **verses 24-30** encourages our understanding of God's rule since,

⁴ Ephesians 6:11-12; 1 Peter 5:8

⁵ Matthew 13:5-7, 20-22; 1 John 2:19



What seems messy now, will eventually shine in purity.

Here Jesus uses another familiar farming illustration to picture Satan's active attempts to mess up His kingdom on earth.

This parable should encourage us. Yes, Christian ministry is messy. Yes, the church on earth today is far from perfect. Yes, there's lots of false believers gaining influence around the world in the name of Jesus today...spreading a false gospel and confusing and harming others with their hypocrisy and greed.

But just wait and see ...that what seems so messy now will eventually shine in the radiance of God's purity and perfect righteousness!

Let's jump right to Jesus' explanation in **verses 36-43** to make sure we understand the story's basic elements:

Just like the Parable of the Sower, **verse 37** teaches the farmer is Jesus, or "the Son of Man" which was well

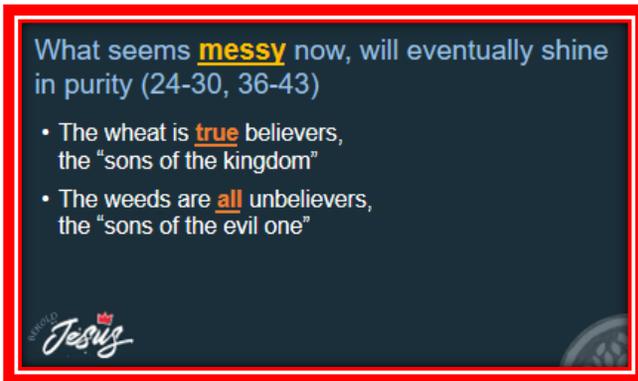
⁶ Revelation 20

known Jewish title for the Messiah.⁷ This farmer has an enemy whom **verse 39** calls “the devil.”

While Jesus is planting wheat, the Devil tries to sabotage Jesus’ efforts by planting weeds.

So this is an ancient example of bioterrorism. Such agricultural sabotage was common enough in Jesus’ day that the Romans had a specific law against such “germ warfare.”

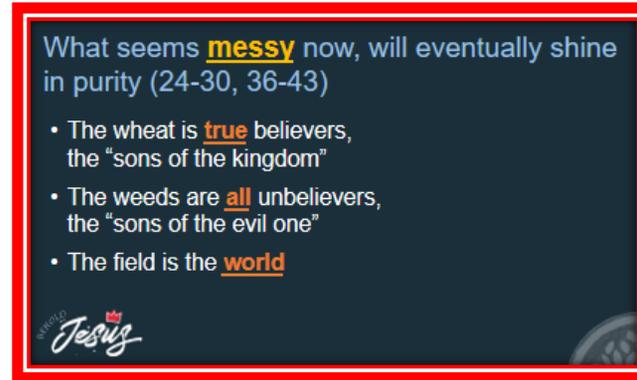
So what do Jesus’ wheat and Satan’s weeds represent?



Verse 38 says the wheat is true believers, or the “sons of the kingdom” and *the weeds are the sons of the evil one*. In other words, **the weeds are all unbelievers**. It doesn’t matter if a person blatantly rejects Jesus in unbelief, or is the thorny or rocky soil who outwardly receives Jesus but ultimately proves to be a false professor. Some unbelievers are religious and some are irreligious. But Satan plants *all* who are not truly submitted to the lordship of King Jesus.⁸

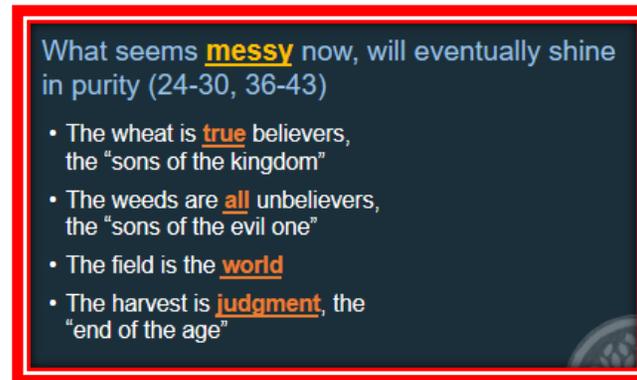
⁷ Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 22:69-70

⁸ C.f. John 8:43-44; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:26; Revelation 12:9



Then notice how **verse 38** makes it clear that **the field is the world**.

So while the field includes the church, the field is not only the church. The whole world is God’s kingdom – after all God created it all, and He is the One who will return to harvest the world in ultimate judgment. Therefore, the field is this planet and



The harvest is judgment or the “end of the age” marked by Jesus’ second coming when every soul will be called to give an account to God.⁹

⁹ Romans 14:10-12

This farming parable is fairly straight forward, but don't miss the stocking twist in **verses 28-30**.

You see, the original audience would have been shocked that the Master prevented his servants from weeding the field. Why not try to undo the mess created by their enemy? Doesn't the Master's patience threaten the survival of all the wheat He originally planted?

Now, if you are using a King James translation, you'll notice the Old English refers to these weeds as "Tares." And that's because the enemy in Jesus' story planted a specific kind of weed called *Darnel* or *Tares*.



And *Darnel Ryegrass* was a huge threat to a wheat farmer, because its outward appearance looked very much like wheat throughout the growing season. It was only at harvest time the farmer could see his real crop had been sabotaged and choked out by worthless Ryegrass.

So although the Master's servants had discovered the weeds early in the growing season, **verse 29** reveals there was no way to avoid harming the wheat while

removing the tares.

The earlier in the season you pulled the tares, the more they looked like true wheat...and so there was no way to know whether you were destroying good crop with the bad.

And the longer you waited to pull the tares, the more their roots would intertwine, so you couldn't root out the bad without also destroying the good.

So the Master says surprisingly, *Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will separate the good from the bad.* "Let's just wait and see," Jesus says. Now this is not what the disciples expected from their King! And it's not our natural response to evil in this world either, is it?

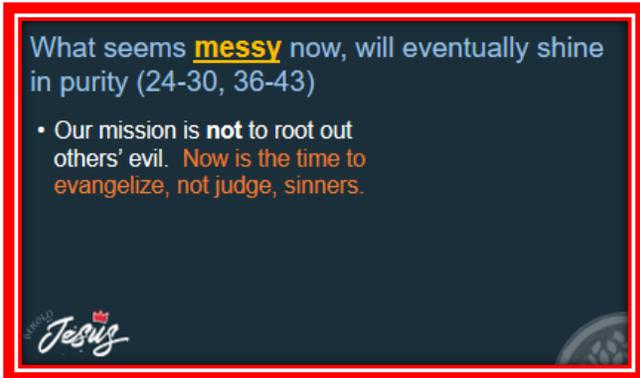
As soon as we encounter evil, we demand justice and try to fix it! But Jesus is teaching His disciples that kingdom life is going to be far messier than we prefer. The sons of His kingdom are going to live together with the sons of the evil one on this planet until judgment day – and only then will we finally see all of the wrongs made right and the full glory of God's children!

Often, we're too much like James and John in **Luke 9** when we encounter evil in the world. For when James and John encountered opposition, they said,

*Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?*¹⁰

But Jesus rebuked them. Because here's the point:

¹⁰ Luke 9:54, c.f. 49-50



Our mission is not to root out others' evil. Now is the time to evangelize, not judge, sinners. Yes Gospel ministry to sinners is messy. There's days when it seems like evil is winning, and our prayers and our witnessing aren't making much difference in the world. But church – we can trust the eternal purposes of God. His eternal reign over His own sons and daughters will never fail. Evil won't win in the end.

So therefore stay on the mission the King gave us.¹¹ Our mission is not to take God's justice into our own hands. Our mission is not to eradicate all evil from this world.

Our messy mission remains clear: sow Gospel seeds of saving mercy. Contrary to what we're being told in today's media, God's mercy—not justice—must rule our hearts.¹²

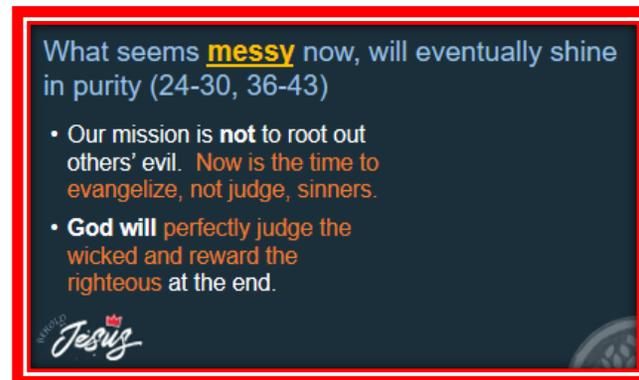
When you become consumed by justice, you will be enraged when sinners act like sinners. Church – Jesus planted us in this world as His gospel ambassadors who are ruled by His love for sinners.¹³

¹¹ Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

¹² James 2:13

Yes Christ commands the church to actively guard itself from false teachers and false professors.¹⁴ But the mission of Christianity is never to separate ourselves from contact with the world. Jesus planted us in the world so that we might be witnesses of His love and mercy, rather than spiteful voices of condemnation, judgment, and hate.

Jesus will make sure His true wheat survives. After all, **verses 40-43** make it clear that,



God will perfectly judge the wicked and reward the righteous at the end of time.

In **verse 41**, Jesus' angels will gather out of the world all the evil – all those who have Satan as their Father – and they will be thrown into hell.

Dear friends, while the doctrine of hell is not popular today you must listen honestly to Jesus' teaching here. It doesn't matter if you look like a Christian, act like a Christian, or are nicer than most Christians. If you are

¹³ 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

¹⁴ Acts 20:29-30; 2 Corinthians 5:2, 5, 11-13; Titus 3:10-11

not planted by the Spirit of God – if your heart hasn't been made new through faith in the finished work of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension – then your eternity will be one of fiery burning and never-ending pain and torment.

Please hear this warning. Hell is not a party. You have no access to any friends in hell. Hell never ends, and its punishment is the most horrific imaginable. Justice will be done in hell. And all who are there deserve its eternal torment – for they are Satan's children.

But all the wheat – all who are planted in the world by the act of God Himself – will be known as *the righteous who will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father*.

Everything will be made right in the end. All the wicked will receive justice, and all the redeemed will experience eternal belonging with the very glories of God forever!

So now...while it seems like Satan is having his way in the world, rest assured that God's kingdom is better off than what you can see now. What seems quite messy now will eventually shine in the purity of God's eternal glory!

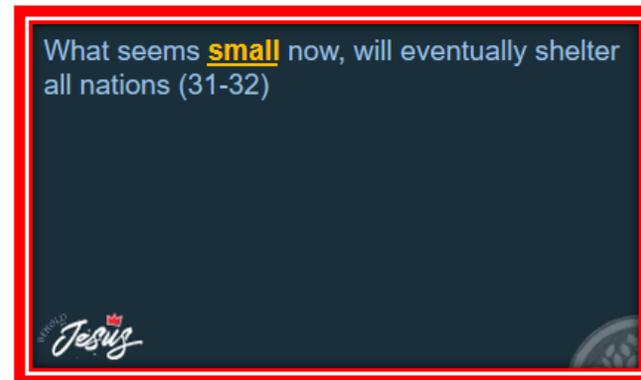
And you know what's most amazing about these truths? Today is a day of salvation! God's Spirit is coming to hearts even as I speak calling sinners to believe in His mercy – to lay down their self-righteous gavels, and rest in the finished work of Jesus for your eternal destiny.

Yes our world and the church today are both messy. But do not allow the evils that you see justify your resistance

¹⁵ Alfred Plummer. An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to
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to Christ Himself. He died to pay for your sins, and grant you new life under His reign of love. Ask Jesus to forgive your sins today, and He will make you new, and grant you a mission of mercy – spreading His gospel to other sinners while we await His final return!

Now then let's quickly unpack the next two parables which both make a similar point. First in **verses 31-32** we learn from the Parable of the Mustard Seed that,



What seems small now, will eventually shelter all nations.

Here Jesus' reign is compared to a mustard seed grain which in spite of its small size, grows into a tree that all kinds of birds can use for a nesting site.

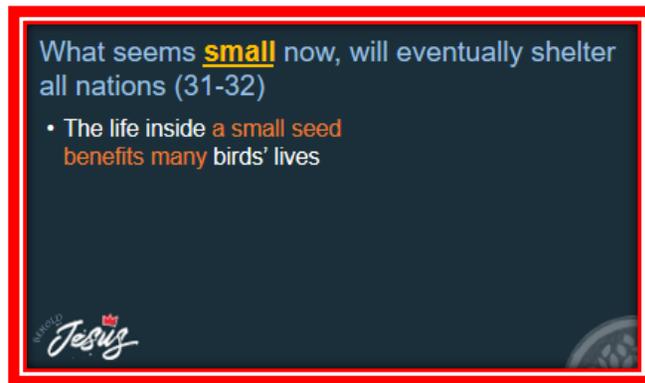
Now the Jews in Jesus' time would say, "as small as a mustard seed" to refer to anything that was so small it was almost unnoticeable.¹⁵ So when Jesus says in **verse 32** His rule on earth is like the smallest of all seeds, we understand Him to be making an analogy, not a technical scientific statement. Certainly there are seeds smaller than the mustard seed, but they are not

St. Matthew. New York: Scribner and Sons, 1909.

garden plants that would have been familiar to Palestine in Jesus' time.

While most mustard plants only become a bush 4-5 foot tall, mustard plants in Palestine could become a tree as tall as 10-15 feet.

So what's Jesus' point in this parable?

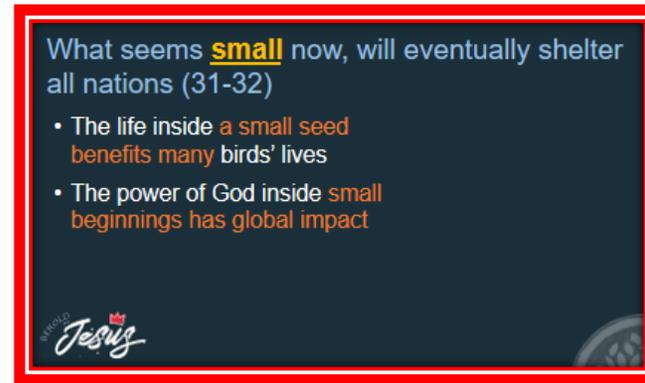


Just as **the life inside a small seed benefits many birds' lives** when it grows into a tree, so likewise God's reign will eventually shelter people from all nations.

So don't judge a seed by its shell. It is the hidden germ inside the seed – and not the seed's outward appearance—which determines its beneficial power.

Also, when Jesus alluded to the birds making nests in the tree branches, these were prophetic words referring to Gentile nations receiving blessings from God.¹⁶

So this parable is teaching that,

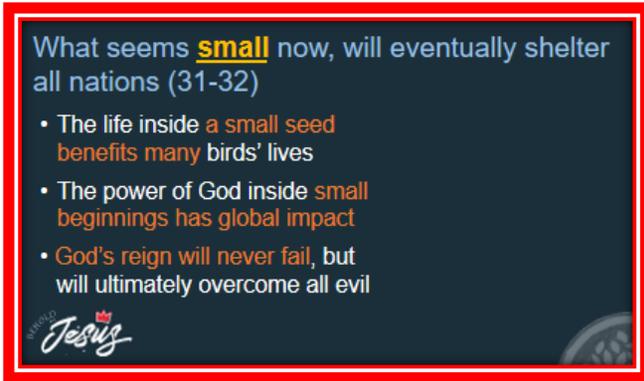


The power of God inside small beginnings has global impact. The life-kernel of God's Spirit causes God's kingdom to grow so that the entire world will be blessed by submission to Jesus' reign.

So be encouraged church! Even though the church today is still small in size when compared with the world's population – God has poured out His kingdom blessings in such a way that people from every tribe and nation around the world are finding refuge, life, salvation, and rest in submission to the Lordship of Jesus!

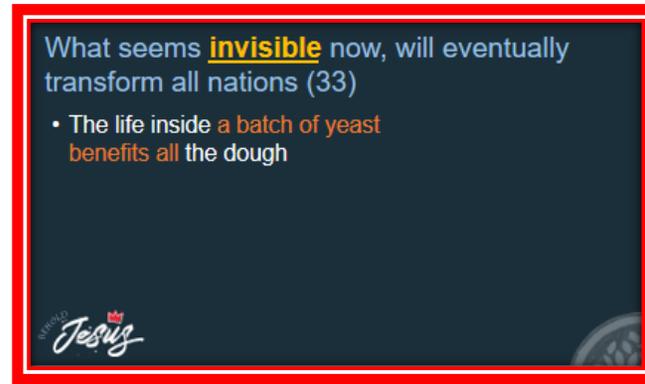
God's kingdom is better than what we can see now!

¹⁶ Ezekiel 17:23-24; 31:3-6; Daniel 4:10-12, 20-22



God's reign will never fail, but will ultimately overcome all evil as church advances His spiritual kingdom until He returns to the earth to establish His millennial reign.

Similarly in **verse 33**, the parable of the leaven or yeast teaches us that,



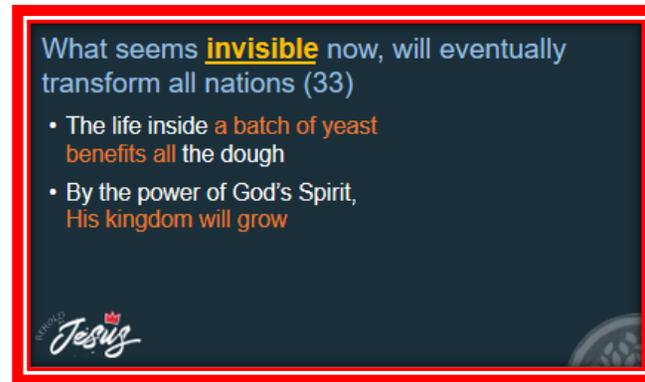
The life inside a batch of yeast benefits all the dough.

Similarly, the Spirit of the King and His kingdom will benefit all the world. Therefore small and hidden things can have a great global impact for God's glory.



What seems invisible now, will eventually transform all nations. Jesus – never to leave anyone out – uses a parable from a Jewish woman's kitchen. They all knew bread doesn't rise without a starter of yeast.

Likewise the kingdom of heaven – or God's reign in the world – is like yeast hidden in a batch of dough.



By the power of God's Spirit, His kingdom will grow

Just as there is no part of the bread that won't be impacted by the pervasive yeast – so likewise there will be no nation on earth that will not bring forth a harvest of souls who have been granted eternal life and made subject to King Jesus' rule.

What seems **invisible** now, will eventually transform all nations (33)

- The life inside a batch of yeast benefits all the dough
- By the power of God's Spirit, His kingdom will grow
- God's reign will never fail, but will ultimately overcome all evil



Therefore, this parable makes the same point as the Mustard Seed Parable. **God's reign will never fail, but will ultimately overcome all evil.**

Despite outward appearances to the contrary... Satan and this world's evil will not defeat the kingdom of God. You'll just need to wait and see that in fact,

Main Point

God's kingdom is better than what we can see now.



God's kingdom is far better off right now than what it seems.

Therefore whenever we encounter evil and Satan's opposition in this world we must,

Application

Trust in the eternal purposes of God (34-35)



Trust in the eternal purposes of God.

Jesus reigns. He is still the King. And although evil storms rage around us, and this world groans from all its wickedness... we must remember that,

Application

Trust in the eternal purposes of God (34-35)

- God is not "out of control"



God is not "out of control."

I think this is why Matthew sandwiches **verses 34-35** in the middle of these three parables.

Because all three parables acknowledge how things aren't looking really good for God's kingdom at the

moment. Even Jesus' use of parables was a judgment against unbelieving Israel.¹⁷

But no matter how bad things look on the outside... God is not out of control. In fact, **verse 35** clearly teaches that God's kingdom is right on schedule. Even Jesus' use of parables actually fulfills biblical prophecy!

Back in **Psalm 78**, Asaph prophesied that God's messenger would use parables to reveal the eternal plan of God which had existed before the world was created.

In other words – **verses 34-35** are reassuring the Jewish readers of this gospel that the postponement of Jesus' earthly kingdom was not a backup "plan B."

Even though it might seem like evil is winning, God is actually fulfilling His eternal plan and,

God's kingdom is doing better than what you can see. Jesus will someday judge all the wicked forever – and none of the righteous will ever have an eternal complaint.

You can trust that Jesus is good, and He will satisfy all of His glorious purposes for you in eternity.

Application

Trust in the eternal purposes of God (34-35)

- God is **not** "out of control"
- **God will** ultimately right all wrongs and rule on earth
- **Listen carefully**, and live by faith, not sight (43b)

BEHOLD Jesus

So then, **Listen carefully, and live by faith, not sight** while you wait for Jesus' return.

Jesus concludes these three parables with a familiar call for the obedience of faith:

He who has ears, let him hear.

In other words, listen carefully. Live by what the King has said – no matter how you feel or what evil is going on around you. Jesus has planted you on this earth to live as His witness of love, not hate...and reach out with His mercy, not judgment. Yes, kingdom living is messier than what we expect.

Application

Trust in the eternal purposes of God (34-35)

- God is **not** "out of control"
- **God will** ultimately right all wrongs and rule on earth

BEHOLD Jesus

He will ultimately right all wrongs and rule on earth

¹⁷ Matthew 13:13-15
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But the Spirit of our King is inside us, guaranteeing the fulfillment of His kingdom purposes for all of eternity!!

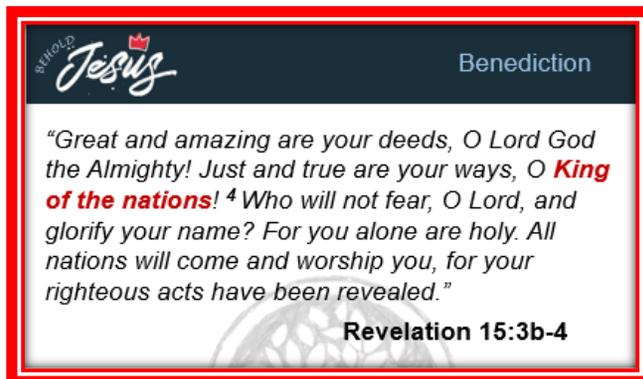


Let's pray.

<<Turn Your Eyes>>

Remember to take advantage of the online Downloads and links!

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4

Recommended Resources on Just Wait and See:

- Psalm 67; 78:2
- Ezekiel 17:23-24; 31:3-6
- Daniel 4:10-12, 20-22; 12:3
- Matthew 16:18, 27; 17:20; 24:31; 25:41
- Mark 9:44
- Luke 9:54; 12:1
- 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 5:6
- 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
- Galatians 5:9
- Philippians 2:15
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9
- 1 John 2:19
- Revelation 19:20, 20:10

- *He Will Reign Forever*, Vlach
- *What is Hell?* Morgan & Peterson
- *The Deliberate Church*, Dever & Alexander

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read Luke 9:54 and Matthew 13:28-30. How can Christians lose their witness for Christ today by judging and condemning sinners instead of sharing God's gospel of mercy and forgiveness with them in love? Discuss how the church age is a time for loving evangelism towards unbelievers, rather than judgment and condemnation.
2. Read Matthew 13:32. Explain how God desires His church to be a blessing to all nations today. How are the nations able to find refuge, protection, and benefits in the shelter of God's kingdom on earth today (the church)?
3. Read Matthew 13:40-42 and 25:41. Do you believe in hell? Why do you believe so many people today deny this important doctrine? Compare Jesus' teaching with Revelation 19:20 and 20:10. How would you respond to someone who says, "At least all my friends will be in hell with me, and we'll party together there forever."
4. Review Matthew 13:34-35. When Jesus uses parables to hide His Gospel mysteries from the Jews, He fulfills Asaph's prophecy from Psalm 78:2. Why is it encouraging to know that Israel's rejection of the Messiah is not God's "Plan B"? How should this encourage Christ-followers today?
5. Why is real Christian ministry so messy? Do you ever wish that God's church today had fewer blemishes and problems? How do the three parables in Matthew 13:24-43 encourage you that God's kingdom will not succumb to Satan's opposition but will continue to thrive and prosper until Christ returns to perfectly establish His millennial reign on earth?