

**Read: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

## Christians Live Differently than Unbelievers

### **Matthew 13:30,43**

Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn . . . Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

“Now is it ready? Now is it ready?” Four-year-old Sydney was bouncing with excitement. “Sydney,” her mom said. “You just planted the seeds yesterday. Not yet.” Sydney couldn’t wait to see when the favorite vegetable she planted would sprout up. She didn’t understand that when she planted seeds, she wouldn’t be eating vegetables the next day!

Sydney kept asking and asking week after week until *finally* she saw something poke out of the ground. “Yes! Almost ready!” she exclaimed. But then one morning Sydney peeked out the window again and cried out, “Oh no! Mom! Look!” Sydney’s mom came to the window and saw that suddenly the garden of beans was also filled with weeds. This meant *big* problems for their growing plants.

This week Jesus tells another parable about seeds. Last week, God’s Word was the seed. This time, Christians are the seeds that grow into wheat. But there’s a big problem in this story— weeds. The weeds are all the many unbelievers who want to cause problems for believers. They want to tempt us to sin. They want us to turn away from God. They want our faith to wither out and die.

Jesus says something interesting in this story though. Sydney and her mom were about to go pull out all the weeds in their garden. But in this story, Jesus said that the wheat and the weeds were going to grow together until the very end. What does he mean?

Jesus is telling us that we believers are going to live together with unbelievers in this world until the very Last Day. We will live in communities together, go to school together, and work together. That will mean *big* problems for us at times. We have to be careful to stay connected to Jesus and his Word so that we as wheat can grow strong in our faith. That way the “weeds” won’t affect us.

Did you hear the wonderful promise at the end though? God in his grace will keep us strong in our faith until the Last Day, judgment day, when Jesus comes back. That’s when he will gather

all the wheat (us believers) into his barn (heaven). Jesus says then we will shine like the sun in his kingdom. So dear Christians, keep growing strong as wheat and watch out for the weeds!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for Younger Children**

- Why are weeds dangerous to plants?
- Why is Satan dangerous to believers?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What sorts of things do unbelievers tempt believers to do?
- When good can come from God allowing us to be tempted in our faith?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Evaluate this statement: In order to protect their faith, Christians should not be friends with any unbelievers.
- Agree or Disagree: TV, movies, and music can be greater dangers to our faith than living by or working with unbelievers. Explain your answer.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, there are many unbelievers who want us to turn away from you, just like Satan does. Help us to grow strong in faith and stay connected to you until you bring us safely to heaven. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 221:1,2 – Blessed Jesus, at Your Word**

Blessed Jesus, at your Word We are gathered all to hear you.  
Let our hearts and souls be stirred Now to seek and love and fear you,  
By your teachings, sweet and holy, Drawn from earth to love you solely.

All our knowledge, sense, and sight Lie in deepest darkness shrouded  
Till your Spirit breaks our night With the beams of truth unclouded.  
You alone to God can win us; You must work all good within us.