

## **The Sons of the Kingdom**

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, July 23, 2017

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

There is a group of people sometimes referred to in the Old Testament as “the sons of the prophets.” The sons of the prophets could be a group of people who are literally descended from the prophets. But in Hebrew it can also mean the disciples of the prophets. This indicates that in the Old Testament in addition to preaching the prophets also had schools in which they instructed their disciples in prophecy and if a disciple had the calling from God to be a prophet in how to preach. The sons of the prophets therefore would have sat at the feet of the prophets. They would have learned the words of the prophets. They believed what the prophets said.

Fast forward into the New Testament and your Lord is talking about the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one. The sons of the kingdom therefore are the disciples of the king. They hear the words of the king. They believe what the king says. The sons of the evil one on the other hand sit at the feet of the evil one. They learn the words of the evil one. They believe what the evil one says no matter what he says.

The sons of the kingdom are the good seed that the Son of Man planted. The Son of Man therefore is the king in the kingdom at whose feet the sons of the kingdom sit. They learn the words of the Son of Man. They believe everything that the Son of Man says no matter what He says. And since they are seeds, by sitting at the feet of the Son of Man and by receiving His instruction, they receive their life from the Son of Man. He plants them. They bear fruit, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty.

The sons of the evil one on the other hand are the seed that the enemy of the Son of Man planted. The enemy of the Son of Man is the slanderer, the Devil. Because the Devil planted them, they receive their life from the devil. They learn the words of the devil. They sit at the feet of the devil. They believe the lies that the devil tells. By doing these things the sons of the evil one receive their life, such as it is, from the evil one. They become weeds.

A weed takes life from another plant. If a weed is let go unchecked it will take life from the plants around it. It uses up the soil. It uses up the moisture. It is a weed. That is why the sons of the evil one cause others to stumble. Be careful here. The translation said that the Son of Man will send His angels to remove all causes of sin from His kingdom, but what our Lord actually in fact said was that at the completion of the age He would send forth His angels to remove all causes of stumbling from His kingdom. Therefore the sons of the evil not only cause lawlessness and sin, they also cause people to stumble. They cause others to stumble in their attention to the word of the Son of Man. They cause others to stumble in their faith in the Son of Man. The weeds do not merely cause a sin there or a sin here. It is much more serious than that. The weeds cause other people not to believe. They cause people to stumble in their faith. By doing so the weed takes away the life of the plants around it. If ever a plant needed to be removed from the Kingdom it would be a weed.

Now let me be clear before I go on. The distinction between the good seed and the evil seed is not good deeds verses bad deeds. The distinction between the sons of the Kingdom who learn from the Son of Man and the sons of the evil one who learn from the evil one is not good deeds verses bad deeds. The sons of the Kingdom are the disciples of the King. They are not perfect until they shine in the Kingdom of their Father. The sons of the evil one are the disciples of the evil one. They cause sin and lawlessness, but they themselves may at times actually appear righteous in the eyes of the world. So do not be deceived. Do not count up your good deeds verses your bad deeds in order to see whether or not they are stacking

up sufficient to make you a son of the Kingdom. Do not put away your sins hoping that if you put away a sufficient quantity of them that you will avoid being a son of the evil one. The distinction between the sons of the Kingdom and the sons of the evil one is this: to whom do you listen and believe? If you listen to the words of the Son of Man and believe them, then you are a son of the kingdom. You will wind up doing good even though your good deeds do not make you a son of the kingdom. If you listen and believe the evil one, then you are a son of the evil one. You will do evil things as a result, but it is not the evil things that you have done that made you a son of the evil one, it is the fact that you listened to him and believed him even as Eve and Adam did in the garden and as our Lord did not in His temptations.

It is in this context that the Son of Man delivers His judgment.

Understand first that the Son of Man is the king of the kingdom. The Son of Man sows the good seed and the good seed are the sons of the Kingdom. Therefore the Son of Man is the king of the kingdom. As king of the kingdom the Son of Man has the right to pronounce judgment. He has the right to pronounce judgment on the whole world. The evil one has no right to pronounce judgment. The word of the evil one counts for nothing. The word of the Son of Man counts for everything. Therefore the Son of Man may pronounce judgment. He may pronounce judgment in any way that He sees fit. He may pronounce judgments both for in time and in eternity.

His judgment is twofold. First, let both grow together.

The field is the world. The good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one. The judgment of the Son of Man is that prior to the completion of the age, both will grow together.

The Son of Man is the Lord of glory. The Son of Man is the Son of the Father. He can call upon legions of angels at any time to do His bidding. He could have sent His angels at the time when He told this parable to gather out of His Kingdom all causes of faithlessness and all doers of lawlessness. He could have sent out His angels at any time since then. He could send out His angels now. He could gather the wicked out of the world and put them in the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. How often the disciples of the Lord wished that He would do so!

When your Lord was entering a town of the Samaritans and they did not welcome Him, James and John asked Jesus for permission to call down fire from heaven on that village. Would the village have deserved fire to have come down on it? Certainly it would have. Our Lord Himself condemns the cities of Bethsaida and Capernaum indicating that if the miracles that He had performed had been performed in Tyre, Sidon, or even Sodom, they would have repented, but Capernaum and Bethsaida, and Corazin had not repented even though they saw His miracles. Therefore the Lord would have been within His rights to have given James and John the authority to call down fire on any village that refused to sit at His feet, receive His words, and believe what He said to them.

But He does not. He did not then and He will not until the completion of the age. His judgment is that both the weeds and the wheat should increase together. So the Sons of the Kingdom will increase. They will increase in number. They will increase in faith. But the weeds will also increase. The ones who tempt unto faithlessness will increase in number. They will increase in strength. The ones who practice lawlessness will increase in number and they will increase in lawlessness. This will be the state of affairs until the completion of the age.

You may not like this. It may not make sense to you. But James and John were rebuked by the Lord for wanting to call fire down on the Samaritans. If they had called fire down on the Samaritans the righteous would have died with the wicked and the wicked would have had no opportunity to repent and so both are permitted to grow together.

You may not like this. It may not make sense to you. You read the papers. You watch the TV. You surf the internet. You listen to the news reports of the powerful people of the world. You read about the politicians and the celebrities and the wealthy who guide society and you read about the crimes that get committed. You see the increase of those people who cause faithlessness. They even make you question your own faith and whether or not your own convictions are true. They make you question the word of God and whether or not it should be taken the way that God intended it to be taken. And you may want fire to come down from heaven and consume them, but there will be no fire until the completion of the age. There will be no condemnation until the completion of the age. That is the judgment of the king.

The reason that the king has judged things to be so is for the sake of the sons of the kingdom. He knows that if He renders fire on the causes of faithlessness and the practitioners of lawlessness, that He will kill the wheat as well.

Jehu in his zeal to put to death in Israel all who worshipped idols put to death those people necessary for the successful administration of the land. And even though Jehu was loyal to the Lord he received the Lord's rebuke for all of the blood that he shed.

Your Lord Jesus Christ is wiser than Jehu. He delivers His judgments rightly in accord with the will of the Father. For now in order to preserve your faith both the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one will increase together.

But make no mistake. Just because the Lord is not judging them now does not mean that he will never judge them. The completion of the age will come. The weeds will get their chance to repent and then the end will come. The weeds will get more chance to repent than they deserve and then the end will come. When the end comes those who have sat at the feet of the evil one, learned his words, and believed what he said, will be cast by angels into the fiery furnace. There they will weep and gnash their teeth against the judgments of the Son of Man. But no amount of gnashing will change their fate.

Those who sat at the feet of the Son of Man, learned His words, and believed what He said, will shine in the Kingdom of their Father. It is their Father's kingdom after all. They are sons of the kingdom. Being sons of the kingdom they inherit the Father's kingdom. They inherit God's kingdom and everything that it is and does.

This is the second fold of the judgment of the Son of Man.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.