

# Youth Teaching Resources

July 19, 2020



## What the World Needs Now...

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30—"The World Needs Rest"

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23—"The World Needs the Word"

**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43—"The World Needs Patience"**

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52—"The World Needs Wisdom"

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# The World Needs Patience

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

## YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE

Post pictures of people that have helped you grow as a person across your social media accounts. Use the hashtag #kingdompeople across your social media platforms as you make your posts. Go back and search the hashtag and see who other people have called out for helping them grow.

## TEACHING THE LESSON

### Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip “Growing Suspicious” from *The Truman Show*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What ideas have they planted in Truman’s head?
- 2) Why does Truman get suspicious?
- 3) How does Truman confront his suspicions?
- 4) How does our own life have both good and bad in it?
- 5) How does our faith help us tell the difference between those things that help and those things that hurt?

## Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Matthew 13.1-9;18-23. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) How can weeds be indistinguishable from the good crops?
- 2) Why would someone intentionally sow bad seed on top of good seed?
- 3) Why is the judgement of individuals delayed?
- 4) What did Jesus want the hearers of this parable to understand?
- 5) Why do you need to look at people's motivations as well as their actions?
- 6) How do we get rid of the "weeds" that are in our life?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) Do you think there is a "secret message" to Jesus' parables?
- 2) Who are these reapers that Jesus spoke of?
- 3) What is the fire and sun that the parable speaks of?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": What is the weed?

## Transformation

Conclude your session by introducing the Social Media Challenge for the week:

Post pictures of people that have helped you grow as a person across your social media accounts. Use the hashtag #kingdompeople across your social media platforms as you make your posts. Go back and search the hashtag and see who other people have called out for helping them grow.

After introducing the challenge, facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) How difficult was it to come up with people who have helped you grow as a person?
- 2) What similarities do you see in these people's lives?
- 3) What attributes of these people would you emulate?
- 4) How do you continue to grow in your faith even after these people have helped you?

Close with a prayer asking God that we be able to see the difference in the wheat and the tares. Also ask that we could be people that plant the good seed.

## Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

**Ins and outs**—The Gospel of Thomas reflects an early heresy known as “Gnosticism.” The Gnostics claimed to have secret mystical knowledge that could enable the initiated to ascend through various spiritual “spheres” on their way to heaven. Gnostics made a clear division between those who were “in” and “out,” those who had the secret knowledge and those on the outside. Thus, the Gospel of Thomas adapts the “wheat and weeds” parable from Matthew as a way of illustrating their idea of a separation between those with and without the Gnostic community.

The parable appears in logion 57:

Jesus said, “What the kingdom of the father resembles is a man who had a [good] (kind of) seed. His enemy came at night and scattered grass seed in with the good seed. The man did not let them pluck out the grass, saying to them, ‘Do not, lest you (plur.) go to pluck out the grass and then pluck out the wheat along with it. For, on the day of the harvest the grass will be obvious, and it will be plucked out and burned.’”

From Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age* (Doubleday, New York/London, 1987), accessed at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/thomas/gospelthomas57.html>.

**Angelic reapers**—Some readers may find it odd that angels would be involved in separating people for judgment, but they also appear in Matt. 24:30-31 as being dispatched to gather the elect in the eschaton. Angels are also described as having a role in judgment in Matt. 16:27 and 25:31-33.

Matthew was especially concerned about those who caused others to stumble (see 18:6-7), and in our text the angels gather “all causes of sin and all evil doers.” The word behind “causes of sin” is *skandalitzein*, or “cause to stumble,” the root of the English word “scandalize.” The translation “evildoers” is literally “those who do lawlessness.” The word “lawlessness” is from *anomia*, which is composed of the word for law (*nomos*) with the negative prefix *a*. They live without recognition or respect for the law—in this sense, biblical teachings of right and wrong.

**Fire and sun**—The image of the angelic reapers throwing the wicked into the fire (vv. 41 and 50) is taken from Dan. 3:6, where those who refused to worship the king’s image would be thrown into a “fiery furnace.” The developing concept of hell was drawn from the image of the valley of Hinnom (*Gehenna* in Hebrew and the Greek transcription). Located on the southwest side of Jerusalem, the narrow valley was used for many years as the city’s trash dump, where refuse was piled, dead animals or bodies were sometimes abandoned, and fires were perpetual. Jeremiah accused certain kings of Judah of having offered sacrifices

## Digging Deeper *continued*

to Baal and even sacrificing their children to Molech at a place called “Topheth” (which means “burning”) in the Valley of Hinnom. Jeremiah cursed the valley, saying it would become a scene of slaughter and punishment (Jer. 7:30-34, 19:1-9). Not surprisingly, it came to symbolize a place of judgment.

The author of Matthew was particularly fond of the phrase “gnashing of teeth.” He used it six times (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), but it appears elsewhere only in Luke 13:28.

While judgment will bring punishment for the wicked, according to the text, the righteous will be rewarded, and will “shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (v. 43). The verb for “shine” is the same one used of Jesus in Matthew’s version of the Transfiguration story (17:2), and recalls a phrase from Daniel 12:3: “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

**A holy ambiguity**—Consider these thoughts from Theodore J. Wardlaw, as he ponders the instruction to let weeds and wheat grow together:

There is a strategy in these words of restraint that pushes away from premature clarity regarding such matters of discernment and makes room instead for a holy and purposeful ambiguity. This is not a vague and ungrounded “whatever” kind of ambiguity, but an ambiguity that is both wise and intentional. In our impatience with others, we often want to bring matters to a head and so determine whether others are in or out; but the God who is glimpsed in this parable models for us an infinite patience that frees us to get on with the crucial business of loving, or at least living with, each other. ...

On such a journey as this, it is not our job to determine who is within and who is beyond this God’s attention. It is rather our job to imagine everyone as belonging to this God, and therefore, with all that we can muster, to endeavor to embrace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, God’s holy and purposeful ambiguity.

(From *Feasting on the Word, Year A*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, vol. 3 of Accordance electronic ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011], paragraph 16588.)

## The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

### What is this weed?

Wheat and darnel are virtually indistinguishable until they mature enough for the heads of grain to form. At that point, wheat forms heads of grain in neat rows, while the heads of darnel are more gangly. Mature wheat turns brown, while the seeds of darnel are black.

Grains of the darnel plant not only dilute the wheat: they are poisonous enough to kill if eaten in sufficient quantities. Darnel seeds cause dizziness and nausea and have such hallucinogenic properties that the plant's scientific name is *Lolium temulentum*: the Latin word *temulentus* means "drunk."

Through the years, some have taken advantage of the weed's hallucinogenic properties. Reportedly, followers of Persephone and Demeter in ancient Greece used it to induce a frenzied state. In Europe, it was sometimes used as an anesthetic, but also baked into "dazed bread" or brewed into beer as a means of intentionally getting high. The plant is mentioned in a variety of literary illusions including Shakespeare, who portrayed King Lear as having darnel in his crown. (Source: Howard Thomas, Jayne Elisabeth Arther, and Richard Marggraf Turley, "Remembering Darnel, a Forgotten Plant of Literary, Religious, and Social Significance," *Journal of Ethnobiology* 36:1 (March 2016), 29-44), cited by Sarah Laskow at *Atlas Obscura*, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/wheats-evil-twin-has-been-intoxicating-humans-for-centuries>).

In the illustration at left, darnel is the plant on the left, wheat is on the right (from Otto Wilhelm Thomé *Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz* 1885, Gera, Germany: Public Domain).

Modern agricultural methods have eliminated darnel as a threat, though it can still be a problem for subsistence farmers in underdeveloped countries.

