

[Slide #1...Opening Screen]

[Slide #2...Seed Sown Among Thorns]

Communion at the End of Message

Collect some Bread and Wine/Grape Juice

[Slide #3...SONS OF THE KINGDOM]

Matt. 13:38 The good seed are the sons of the kingdom

[Slide #4...INTRODUCTION]

The parable of the Sower

After presenting to the multitudes (Matt. 13:2) the parables of the sower, the parable of the tares, parable of the mustard seed, and the parable of the leaven; Matthew felt it important to explain, in (Matt. 13:34) that first of all he was presenting these parables to the multitudes, and that Jesus used that method of teaching when he addressed them. (Matt. 13:34) The Parable of the Sower, Jesus concluded in Mark's account provided understanding to all his parables. Without an understanding of that parable, Jesus said: "How will you understand all the parables?" (Mark 4:13). Jesus did explain the parable in detail to the disciples after they had left the multitudes. (Matt. 13:36-43) I am so glad he did, and that the explanation has been left for us to ponder lest we misunderstand what was meant. We have at various Theological Conferences been pointed to that parable time and again. Allow me to do it one more time. Anything so important as to cloud our understanding if we do not "get it", needs to be visited often. This is not to say that these points have been neglected at all. I have for

some months now been driven by what I am here presenting this morning.

The Good Seed

The good seed are the sons of the kingdom (Matt. 13:38). Because you believe you become a repository for the seed and actually become the seed itself, due to the message you now carry. Let me first impress on you all that you are sons and daughters of the kingdom of God because you have heard the gospel of the kingdom and believed it.

The Tares

The tares are sons of the evil one/ the enemy/the devil (Matt. 13:38-39)/Satan/(Mark 4:15) whose desire it is to: “take away the word of the kingdom from your heart so that you might believe and be saved”. (Luke 8:8:12) He is dead set on destroying the work of the Son of Man (the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom) who went forth to sow the seed/the word/the word of God/the word of the Kingdom/ (Matt. 13:18-23/Mark 4:13-20/Luke 8:9-15)

The desired result of this sowing of the word of the kingdom is “believing and being saved”. The evil one, the enemy, the devil, Satan wants to thwart that grand design offered by the sower. Surely, we don't want to unwittingly give Satan an opening for yet more mischief—we're not oblivious to his sly ways! 2 Cor 2:11 (MSG)

We know what happened in the Garden of Eden. After all, Jesus knew it too:

"You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie,

he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
(John 8:44 (NASB))

Now that we know, according to the parable, who gets in the way, we need to notice those “sly ways” which are used to “take away the word of the kingdom from our hearts”. Satan is quick to take away the seed sown beside the road. When the message is not fully understood he has fertile although rocky soil and takes the message about the kingdom away and is quick to do so. (Mk. 4:14)

The Rocky Soil

It is difficult to grow and produce fruit in rocky soil. The message in rocky soil is received with joy like the joy experienced by the man who found hidden treasure in a field and experienced great joy because of this find, so much so that he sold everything he had and bought the field so he could have possession of the treasure. (Matt. 13:44) The merchant who found the pearl of great value sold all that he had and purchased the pearl. (Matt. 13:45) Because of the rocks the seed only remains for a short time. Not having the time to grow roots into what soil there is makes the work difficult if not impossible. When confronted by friends and others with criticism because of the gospel of the kingdom they last only for a short time. So sad! Do the criticisms sound something like this: (the gospel is about going to heaven at death, not about the coming kingdom)? (Matt. 13:20-21) Luke adds that in time of temptation they fall away. (Luke 8:13)

Seed Sown Among Thorns

Seed sown among thorns is accompanied by “worry of the world”, “anxieties of life”, “the desire of other things”, and the “deceitfulness of riches, and pleasures of life”. All these take a heavy toll on those who are so happy to have found the hidden treasure, the pearl of great

price, the word of the kingdom. Often starting out so well and with great promise but fail to bring forth fruit because of the thorns in their lives. The word of the kingdom is choked by these thorns.

Conclusion/Dangers

The secret of being better prepared for “being saved” is to hear and to understand the word of the kingdom. (Matt. 13:23) To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) Jesus asked: “What will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26) Surely, he was correct in saying: “IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER LIFE lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell”. (Mk 9:45) To have opportunity to be invited into the “joy of our Master” in the kingdom of God will truly be worth it all and more. (Mat. 25:21)

So, what are the dangers that keep us from “bearing fruit with perseverance in an honest and good heart, holding it fast”? (Luke 8:15)

- Hear the message
- Understand the message
- Beware of the enemy, the evil one, Satan (he is a crafty devil)
- Beware of rocks and thorns
- Beware of Criticism, affliction, and persecution
- Beware of the worry of the world
- Beware of the anxieties of life
- Beware of the desire of other things
- Beware of the deceitfulness of riches
- Beware of the pleasures of life.

[Slide #5...the early church]

The gospel of the kingdom was making great headway into the world following the church being empowered with the Holy Spirit. Luke said: “the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved”. (Acts 2:47) “In one day there was added to the number about three thousand souls”. (V.41) When Peter and John were put in prison, Luke said, “many of those who had heard the message (the gospel of the kingdom) believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand”. (Acts 4:4). As Stephen stepped into the picture Luke said: “The word of God (the gospel of the kingdom) kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem”. Acts 6:7. Luke said: “The word of the Lord (the gospel of the kingdom) continued to grow and to be multiplied.”

“Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. When he went to Antioch and saw how God had blessed the believers there, he was very happy. He encouraged them all, saying, “Always be faithful to the Lord. Serve him with all your heart.” Many more people became followers of the Lord. When the church in Jerusalem heard about this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch.” Acts 11:22-24 ERV

(Acts 12:24). As many of the priests in Jerusalem became obedient to the message, men came down from Judea teaching the brethren in Antioch about their need to be circumcised according to the custom of Moses. Dissension and debate erupted as you might imagine and a need for a conference was determined and Paul and Barnabas were summoned to Jerusalem to address the issue. Though the Pharisee contingent were adamant regarding the necessity of circumcision and observation of the Law of Moses, cooler heads prevailed, and Paul and Barnabas who brought great news to the council from the Gentile congregations were sent with good news from the council at Jerusalem. Arriving back at Antioch with letter in hand which the brethren received with gladness.

[Slide #6...Retracing our Steps]

**"Let's go back and visit all our friends in each of the towns where we preached the Word of God. Let's see how they're doing." Acts 15:36
(MSG)**

Paul and Barnabas determined that there was a need for them to retrace their steps to the people where they had preached the gospel to see how they were doing.

This brings me to the main point in this message this morning:

[Slide #7...Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing]

- “And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an *eternal gospel* to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, “*Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.*” Revelation 14:6-7 NASB

This is the main thing.

Across the years there have been many people who have heard this twofold message through the abiding work of the Churches of God General Conference, by Restoration Fellowship, by the internet, by Focus on the Kingdom, by a plethora of books and tracts, phone conversations, conferences, as well as other means of communication. “The gospel of the kingdom and the witness that there is no other God but YHWH who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and springs of water” have been promoted by these and other entities across the

years. It is my desire to at least through this medium and message to address those who will listen and to ask:

[Slide #8...How are you doing?]

By way of the internet today, I ask you who have heard this twofold message, (The eternal gospel and the encouragement to worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters; “HOW ARE YOU DOING?” How is the seed, the word of the kingdom, the word, the gospel, growing in your life? Have you been influenced by any of these warnings given by Jesus in the parable of the sower?

[Slide #9...How are you Doing Dear Friend?]

- The evil one
- Criticism, affliction, and persecution
- Worry of the world
- Anxieties of life
- Desire of other things
- Deceitfulness of riches
- Pleasures of life?

Have you continued to build on that message about the kingdom? Do you continue to bask in the joy of the hope of entering into life at the Parousia? How do you relate to the message Jesus sent to the angel of the church at Ephesus? Does it say anything to you?

[Slide #10...Have you forsaken your first love?]

- Yet I hold this against you: You have ***forsaken your first love***.
5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. Rev 2:4-5 (NIV)

Does the excitement generated when you first heard the message about the kingdom continue to be your constant companion? Do you

continue to “taste the good word of God (the gospel of the kingdom) and the powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:5). If you can’t, you need to be renewed in the spirit of you mind, don’t you think? Someone once said, “to miss out on the kingdom of God is to miss out on everything.” If the kingdom of God is not everything then what is? Everything that is anything in this life is nothing compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:18)

[Slide #11...When you heard the Gospel of your Salvation]

- And you also were included in Christ ***when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation***. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory. Eph 1:13-14 (NIV)

Hearing the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation and believing and being sealed with the deposit of the promised Holy Spirit, marks us as candidates for the inheritance. A reminder that we’ll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life now and in the world to come, a life unending on a renewed earth, under a renewed heaven. If that doesn’t lite your fire, your wood must be terribly wet. Don’t forget that opportunity to “reign with Christ for a thousand years” during which time Satan will be bound and cannot deceive the nations as he did our mother Eve and continues to deceive so many with promises of pink clouds and harps in heaven; a true time of renewal. I am calling us all to “walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls us into His kingdom and glory”. (1Thess. 2:12) Jesus will say to some “enter into the joy of your master”, Matt 25:21 (NASB) as He did to those in the parable of the talents. The prospect of entering that joy brings an air of excitement to me as I hope it does to you.

[Slide #12...Let the word of the Kingdom Profit You?]

- Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.² For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but ***the word they heard did not profit them***, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Heb 4:1-2 (NASB)

Is the word, the gospel of the kingdom, being profitable in your life today? At a time when many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with him anymore; Jesus asked the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” Peter answered “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life?” (Life in the age to come) (John 6:66-68)

[Slide #13...What have you done with what you have heard?]

The writer to the Hebrews wrote it beautifully:

- We have the honor of sharing in all that Christ has if we continue until the end to have the sure faith we had in the beginning. **(Heb. 3:14 ERV)**

Jesus put it this way as he instructed John to write to the angel of the Laodicean church:

- 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. **Rev 3:21 (NASB)**

Jesus instructed John to write to the angel of the church at Thyatira:

- 'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;²⁷ and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received *authority* from My Father; **Rev 2:26-27 (NASB)**

[Slide #14...Don't give in or give out]

It is common and easy to get side-tracked in our journey of faith. Falling down, as we generally do from time to time, is not the problem. It's when we don't get back up-that is the problem. Fall as we do-but do not fall away as we might. If during your journey you have fallen down let me encourage you to get back up and get back on your journey toward your life in the age to come. Jesus said my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be. Remember that Jesus did not give up on Peter. I really love this:

- "Simon, stay on your toes. Satan has tried his best to separate all of you from me, like chaff from wheat. **32** Simon, I've prayed for you in particular that you **not give in or give out**. When you have come through the time of testing, turn to your companions and give them a fresh start." Luke 22:31-32 (MSG)

[Slide #15...Let no man take you crown Rev. 3:11]

God does not want you or any of us to be lost. Jesus warned, "Let no man take your crown". He encouraged us to remain faithful to the end if we want to be saved. Don't you want to be saved? How bad do you want to be saved? Wouldn't you like to live forever, on a glorified earth, in perfect peace, no more death, no more mourning nor crying, no more pain?

- Isaiah 9:7 said of the Messiah, "There will be no end of His government or of peace on the throne of David." (*Remember that David was a murderer and an adulterer. But God loved him.*)
- They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:9 (NASB)

- He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." Rev 21:4 (NASB)

[Slide #16...Warnings from a Temple Singer, Asaph]

The following words were either written or transcribed by Asaph, a temple singer. They could have been transcribed words of David. Whatever, they do provide a look into God's desire for your salvation:

- When He killed them, then they sought Him, And returned and searched diligently for God; 35 And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer. 36 But they deceived Him with their mouth And lied to Him with their tongue. "For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant. But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger And did not arouse all His wrath. Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, A wind that passes and does not return." Psalms 78:34-39 NASB

Is there anything in those verses that you can relate to? Is your heart steadfast toward God? Ezekiel ask an interesting question. Since we know that I am talking about life and death issues; why not get serious about things that really matter?

[Slide #17...Why would you choose to die?]

- "The upshot is this, Israel: I'll judge each of you according to the way you live. So turn around! Turn your backs on your rebellious living so that sin won't drag you down. **31** Clean house. No more rebellions, please. Get a new heart! Get a new spirit! Why would you choose to die, Israel? **32** I take no pleasure in anyone's death.

Decree of God, the Master. "Make a clean break! Live!" Ezek 18:30-32 (MSG)

[Slide #18...We're talking about life and death issues.]

Are you being faithful in this "new covenant" relationship that the word of the kingdom has introduced to you? God knows our every weakness. He will not forget that we are but flesh, a wind that passes away. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Don forget this:

- My dear friends, if you know people who have wandered off from God's truth, don't write them off. Go after them. Get them back **20** and you will have rescued precious lives from destruction and prevented an epidemic of wandering away from God. James 5:19-20 (MSG)

[Slide #19...What will be our Legacy?]

Jesus devoted three and a half years to the task. Peter was a slow learner. He knew when Jesus asked that Jesus was the Messiah, God's son, but failed to see his purpose in going to the cross. He observed the transfigured Jesus and couldn't have missed the weeping Savior in the Garden. He surely didn't miss the crucified Son of God on the cross. But, yes, he denied his Lord three times but was restored at the breakfast of fish. His sermon on Pentecost was a masterpiece but Peter even showed signs of weakness later. We all show signs of weakness at different points in our journey, don't we? But let me confess to you and hopefully you too will confess, "He's still workin on me, to make me what I need to be. It took him just a week to make the moon and stars, the sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars. How loving and patient He must be, Cause He's still workin on me;" as we often sing from the words of the song written by Joel Hemphill. I want you to know that

he's still workin on you too. Have you wandered off from the truth? Do you know someone who has wandered off from the truth. Remember James words:

- My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from heath and will cover a multitude of sins. James 5:20 NASB

Why not rededicate yourself to the work of preparation for the soon coming kingdom of God? In historical terms, a legacy is something that is handed down from one period to another period of time. That most often cannot be possessions and wealth for these do not a true legacy make. Solomon said, "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children." Prov. 13:22. Solomon had the wherewithal to leave great wealth to his children and grandchildren but those were not the most significant parts of the legacy he left. The book of Proverbs contains so much of that legacy, don't you think?

[Slide #20...The Legacy of Moses to Joshua

After the death of Moses, who would lead the children of Israel into the land of promise? Joshua witnessed firsthand the power and shining glory of YHWH while under the tutelage of Moses who modeled courage, meekness, and obedience. The legacy left by Moses fell naturally on Joshua, who at first was called Hoshea Hebrew for salvation. Moses called him Joshua, the Hebrew word for (YHWH is my salvation). The time spent with Moses was well spent. Salvation became personal with Joshua. Moses left a great legacy.

Dawn Franks said, "A legacy is a record of what you want to leave behind, your hopes and dreams for the next generation....It is an account of the things that mattered most in your life, the lessons you

learned and the values you cherish most.” When you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in your life you are bound to leave a record for the next generation of your hopes and dreams, those things that you cherish most.

[Slide #21...Paul’s Legacy to Timothy/Our Legacy

- “Timothy, I tell you this seriously, as God and Christ Jesus know everything that we do. When Christ Jesus comes to rule as king, he will judge everyone. He will judge the people who are alive and also those who have already died. When he appears, he will decide what should happen to them all. So, I tell you this now: Tell God's message to people. Always be ready to speak God's message clearly to people, whether they want to listen to you or not. Warn people when they are doing something wrong. Tell them to stop doing wrong things, and explain to them what they ought to do. But be very patient while you teach them what is true. Do this, because a time will come when people will not listen to God's true message. Instead, they will want to hear all kinds of new messages that will make them happy. So they will find many teachers for themselves who will tell them what they want to hear. People will refuse to listen to God's true message. Instead, they will want to listen to silly stories that are false. But you yourself must continue to think seriously and clearly. Be patient and brave when troubles come. Continue to tell the good news about Christ to people. Do all the work that God has given you to do as his servant. As for me, it is nearly time for me to die. My death will be like a drink offering that they pour out to God. My life as God's servant will end. I have worked to serve Christ well. I have finished everything that God wanted me to do, like a runner who has run to the end of the race. I have continued to believe God's true message. So now a gift is waiting for me. The Lord will

make me completely right and happy. That will be like a crown which the Lord will give me on that great day when he judges people. He is the judge who is fair and right. He will not only give that gift to me. He will give it to all those people who love him. They will be happy to see him when he comes again.” 2 Timothy 4:1-8 EASY

[Slide #22...The Gospel-Messiah’s Message]

Please pay close attention to the words of Jesus. He is God’s Son. Listen to Him:

- “Then Jesus answered the people who had asked him about the story. ‘You should understand this story. If you do not understand it, you will not understand any of my stories. The seeds are like the message from God. The farmer is like a person who tells people about that message. Some seeds fell on the path. That is like some people who listen to the message. But then Satan comes and he quickly takes the message away from their minds. Some of the seeds fell on soil with rocks in it. This is also like some people who hear God's message. These people are happy to believe it for a time. But they are like plants that have not grown down well into the soil. So they only believe for a short time. They may have problems. Or because they obey God's message, other people may do bad things to them. When that happens, these people soon stop believing. Some seeds fell among thorn bushes. This is like some other people who hear God's message. But they have many troubles in their minds. They think that more money and other valuable things will make them happy. So they do not let God's message change them. They are like plants that do not grow well and make new seeds. But some seeds fell on good soil. This is like other people who listen to the message from God.

They understand the message and they believe it. These people are like good plants that grow well. From one seed, some good plants make 30 new seeds. Other good plants make 60 new seeds, and some good plants make 100 new seeds.'" Mark 4:13-20 EASY

[Slide #23...Communion]

Let me go over with you again exactly what goes on in the Lord's Supper and why it is so important.

- I received my instructions from the Master himself and passed them on to you. The Master, Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, took bread. Having given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me. 1 Cor 11:23-24 (MSG)
- "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." John 6:51 (NASB)
- After supper, he did the same thing with the cup: This cup is my blood, my new covenant with you. Each time you drink this cup, remember me. 1 Cor 11:25 (MSG)
- "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.**54** "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.**55** "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.**56** "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.**57** "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.**58** "This is the bread which came down out of

heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever." John 6:53-58 (NASB)

- These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:31 (NASB)

[Slide #24 When they had sung a hymn they went out]

*Sign out with this song, join me:

Just as I am without one plea

But that thy blood was shed for me

And that thou bidd'st me come to Thee

O Lamb of God, I come: I come.

Just as I Am....Charlotte Elliott/William B. Bradbury