



A **NOTHER** parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: **25** But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. **26** But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. **27** So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? **28** He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? **29** But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. (Matt 13:24-30)

We will consider the Gospel Text for this past Fifth Sunday after Epiphany as our foundational path for today's devotion, but also expand beyond to other related fields of biblical truth. I would like to introduce this devotion with a quote from Dr. David Gregg in 1879:

Resurrection of Seeds. — I hear the resurrection cry rising from the thousand growing seeds. There are eighty thousand kinds of plants with their millions and millions of seeds; and each seed contains the doctrine of a resurrection and a future life. Each seed has its individuality, and God never mistakes one seed for another. In the resurrection of seeds he never gives one seed the body which belongs to another. A seed may be wrapped away for a thousand years in the cerements of the Egyptian mummy, but a thousand years cannot hinder its resurrection God preserves its life and its identity, and when planted gives it a resurrection and gives it its own body. If God thus clothes the grass of the field, will he not clothe you, O man ?

I can see the glowing truth of Dr. Gregg's illustration and analysis of the manner in which God has endowed each soul, and each seed, as a perfectly distinct individual with whom He is intimately familiar. He made us, and every other thing that exists; so, He should know us well.

We see a recurring juxtaposition in Scripture of certain elements as representing either good or bad. We will recall the two Trees of the Garden at Eden from which man had the choice of fruits – the Tree of Life (representing Christ), or the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (representing Satan). I need not remind you of the painful truth of the tree from which Adam and Eve chose to partake. We see such contrasts between good and evil all the way from Genesis to the Book of Revelations.

When we consider the birth of evil at Eden, we must consider the first birth to follow once our primitive parents were expelled – Cain! Cain was a murderer. The second son, Abel, was a prophet. When we read the account of the beginning of Cain's sin, it may seem a small thing until we consider the results to which such sin may lead. Cain defied the Lord in bringing a worthy offering, for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. (see Hebrews 9:22) So Cain brought what he had resolved to be a suitable offering in spite of God's command – the fruit of the ground. The earth had been cursed by Adam's sin at Eden. God said to Adam: . . . *cursed is the ground for thy sake . . .* (Gen 3:17 (KJV) Cain's disregard for the reverence due His Maker led to more wickedness in the murder of his only brother. And Cain murdered Abel out of a jealous rage because Abel had obeyed the Will of God in his sacrifice by sacrificing from his own flock. Some may consider Cain's first sin of lower magnitude than his second, but that would be erroneous thinking. It is pride that lifts itself above obedience to God that spawns all other sins. David's sin of adultery was of greater detriment to his soul than his second sin of murder because adultery was the parent of that murder.

These first two sons are a foreshadow of two other sons with eternal meaning to our Faith – Adam, and the Lord Jesus Christ! *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* (1 Cor 15:22-23) Adam is our natural and federal father in the flesh. We inherit his sinful nature and his sin-poisoned blood for which there is no natural cure; however, the elect of God have received eternal life through the grace of adoption by way of our Lord Jesus Christ who has redeemed us by the sacrifice of the cross:

WHEREFORE, *as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, WHO IS A FIGURE OF HIM WHO WAS TO COME. 15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.* (Romans 5:12-17)

The good and bad seed of Matthew 13:24-30 represents those who called according to God's good pleasure in Christ as Savior; but note: all who merely claim Christ are not His at all!

WHEN the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **32** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: **33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. **34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **35** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: **36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. **37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? **38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? **39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? **40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. **41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: **42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: **43** I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. **44** Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? **45** Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. **46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matt 25:31-46)

Now, in discussing the Two Seed in greater depth, we recognize that a seed carries its future life embedded in its kernel. The tiniest component of the seed is the very source of its life which activates all other features to cause the seed to produce the kind of vegetation it is intended to be by the Creator.

The Two Seed that are sewn in Matthew 13:24 are of a totally different nature. The wheat have no choice but to produce wheat fruit – so much so that when ripe for harvest, their tassels are so full of wheat that their heads bow before the Day Star. But the tares produce no fruit. They grow taller than the wheat and remain proudly erect. It is this feature, not observable while they are yet not fully mature, that distinguishes them to the harvester from the wheat.

Notice the good seed were sewn first. Later, the enemy comes along and sows bad seed among them. As the good seed sprout and seek the glorious sunlight, the bad seed will sprout just a bit later. The soil, for both seeds in this case, is good soil, prepared and cultivated for the sowing. This good soil represents the Church itself. How many churches have begun with a fervor to serve the Lord in reverent faith, but are later overtaken by rebels within who turn the bow of the church ship into strange and uncharted waters – waters that are alien to the purpose of the Lord's Church? These rebels are the bad seed who exist in the church. When they come in at first, they appear no different from the plants of good seed that have sprouted, but they have been placed among the good seed by the enemy. In the end, they have no fruit and only crowd and deprive the good seed of nourishment of the Spirit.

The churches are full of these bad seed today. These are the birds of Matthew 13:32 that have come to live in the branches of an over-grown church whose vision changed from glorifying the Lord to glorifying men. We should all know that the world is not going to flock to a Church that adheres strictly to the Word of God. So the bad seed of the churches suggest that we should admit the world into the church with its sensual music, its loud and irreverent preaching, and prayerless worship services. The context of Matthew 13 declares these bad seed. Look at the beginning of the same

chapter 13 of Matthew at a different seed: *Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the **FOWLS** came and devoured them up .* (Matt 13:3-4) What do these birds represent? Jesus tells us: *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the **WICKED ONE**, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.* (Matt 13:19) These are the same demons that come to live in the over-grown church of the Mustard Tree of Matthew 13:31-32. What kind of seed, or bird, are you?