

Faith Is Action



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THE PARABLE OF THE TARES

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field?

together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:24-30).

Last month our message *The Parable of the Seed* was also from this text. We learned the seed in this parable is different from the seed in *The Parable of the Sower*, which is *the Word of God*. In this parable, *the seed is the children of God*, those who are born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word



THE PARABLE OF THE TARES

SHARON HARDY KNOTT'S

From whence then has it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

“But he said, Nay; lest while you gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye

of God (1Pet.1:18), and they have the seed to reproduce in them. Since the law of creation is “every seed after its own kind,” we understand Christians are to produce Christians. We are to go out into the field of the world and be scattered as seed. (See FIA July’16: The Parable of the Seed).

Here we will look at what most people focus on when they

study this parable— *the tares*. Jesus gave His disciples the keys to this parable:

Who Are the Good & Bad Seeds?

“Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house, and his disciples came unto him saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that sows the good seed is the Son of Man (Jesus); The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them in a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; who has ears to hear, let him hear” (vv.36-43).

This parable is for the end times, for which Jesus gave us a heads-up. Obviously, all men have ears, so He was talking about hearing with spiritual ears. We know *the good seed refers to people—the children of God*. The

tares also refer to people—the children of the wicked one. Jesus said to a group of people in John 8:44, *“You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.”* Sinners don’t like to be called a *child of the devil*. I don’t recommend you go around saying that to sinners, because they don’t understand it, and it will end your opportunity to present the Gospel. But we must understand we are dealing with *tares*, and a tare is a *child of the devil*.

Please understand, the tares were not sown among sinners as we would expect, and where we would recognize they are sinners. But they were sown amongst *the good seed*, amongst *the saints*, amongst *true Christians—while they slept*. Paul said, *“You are the children of the light and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night.”* (1Thes.5:5-7). *While men slept* means they were caught off guard; when people are lukewarm and distracted by the flesh, when pastors and ministers fail to preach the truth and to warn people.

Political Correctness

Today everyone wants to be politically correct. The political correctness in the world has reached the point of insanity in

my opinion. Case in point: the transgender bathroom policy. We are talking about less than 1% of the population is transgender. Why are we changing laws to inconvenience the other 99+ % and put us at risk by allowing sexual predators to go into bathrooms and locker rooms and shower rooms? Political correctness in the world is absurd, and if we are not careful, some of that same ideology is seeping into the church. I'm talking about the posture to always speak correctly so as not to offend anyone: If I say this, it may offend this person. If I say that, it may offend that person, and if I say such-and-so, it will offend this group. After a while you can't say anything about anybody. Preachers won't preach against sin, and if they do, they're not specific. Sin is some generic thing, but they won't speak out against any specific sin, because they might offend people. Some have reached the point where everything is okay: *I'm okay; you're okay; we are all okay.* Week after week, the message over pulpits is: *You're a wonderful person (and you are). God's got something great for you (and He does). You have a great destiny before you— yes you do, but it is all predicated on your being obedient to God's Word.*

Those who claim God's plan for you is going to come to pass, no matter what you do, are wrong.

It is unscriptural. God has a destiny for each of us, but He also gave us all *free will*. Certain things we do can derail what God intends for us, or alter it greatly, because we have the right of choice, and some of our choices are not God's will. To state your destiny is set regardless of what you do is *fatalism*: "God designed my destiny when I was in my mother's womb." All these things are true, but God said, "*I set before you life*"... a good future, a good plan... "*and I set before you death*"... the alternative... "*I set before you blessing and cursing: therefore choose life*" (Deut.30:19). God is essentially saying, "C'mon, make the right choice! This is the one you want, Child." He will speak to you through preachers and teachers to guide you in the right direction, but you get to choose. If you choose the wrong thing and realize you made a mistake, come to God in humility; He can work something else out. He can still bless you and give you a good future. It may not be exactly like He had planned, but He is a God of redemption, and all His plans are good, so just give it over to Him.

The Soil of the Heart

When all Christians are hearing in churches is the prosperity gospel, it sets them up to fall into the snare of the third ground in

the *Parable of the Sower*. The things that snared them are *the cares and pleasures of life, and the deceitfulness of riches* (Matt.13:22, Lk.8:14). This ground is the most precarious of all, because they went further than grounds one and two and brought forth fruit, but these thorns and thistles choked it out. It's precarious, because it may lead them to believe they are okay. Obviously, the first ground didn't believe what they heard, because they don't even come back to church. The second ground goes on a little while, but they become offended and give up. The third ground endures to bring forth fruit, but it's choked out, *and they became unfruitful*.

“People are quick to accuse others who take a stand against sin as being ‘haters.’”

Saints must be warned about this. Jesus said that if you don't understand *the Parable of the Sower*, you can't understand anything He taught. Today people say, “Don't judge me—you don't have love.” If you don't judge sin, sin will increase. Whatever you allow increases. People are quick to accuse others who take a stand against sin as being “*haters*.” Paul said to the Galatians who were in serious error, “*Am I become your*

enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Gal.4:16). When people are not taught to walk in the Spirit and to know the Word of God, they're going to be susceptible to the tares.

While men slept, the devil sowed tares amongst the good seed *and went his way*. Everything Jesus says is important: The evil one comes, sows his seed, and moves on. Satan knows that in the heart of man is soil where deception can take root deeply, and grow profusely and rapidly, with very little cultivation, because the human heart is predisposed to sin. In the natural, does anyone plant weeds in their garden? In spite of the fact that the y never planted them, they still get them. Weeds grow with little and even no cultivation. But if you want healthy tomato plants, you have to get the right soil; you have to fertilize it, water them, and plant them in a good spot to get the right amount of sun. You have to work hard to get healthy vegetables to grow. But you don't have to do a blessed thing to get weeds to grow—they just grow! You can have a tiny crack in the sidewalk, and a weed will grow there. Because of the curse Adam and Eve's sin brought, the earth is predisposed to growing weeds (Gen.3:17-18). If you don't stay on top of your garden, the weeds you didn't plant will win.

Saints, this is why we preach-

ers must preach messages to cultivate the soil of people's hearts to receive truth: "*Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*" (Pro.4:23). Sometimes I preach messages that get up in your business. I don't do it in a haughty way. I might do it in a bold way, because I am under the anointing, but it's like Paul said, "*Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel!*" I like to preach feel-good messages, and I have a whole file of them, but I realize I cannot neglect to preach the truth that can alert your minds to Satan strategies. When the Holy Spirit gives me a stern word to tell, I'm going to tell it, because I know somebody who is in contact with tares in the church needs to hear it. They do not realize that they are tares. If they did, they would be on guard; they would beware; they would even separate themselves. Jude warned, "*For there are certain men crept in unawares... ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness*" (v.4).

Outside of the KJV of the Bible, you've probably never heard this term. I have a way to remember its meaning: A synonym for *lasciviousness* is *licentiousness*. (Okay, maybe that doesn't help much.) But if you think of *licentiousness* as in *license*—a license to drive, etc., then the meaning is *a license to sin*. In other words, *they use grace*

as a license to sin. They condemn preachers who preach against sin and say that we don't have love. When you are accused of not having love, it knocks you back, and you can have a hard time repositioning yourself. People accuse: "*What kind of Christian are you? You have no love, so I don't have to hear anything you have to say.*" The devil is so clever in planting his tares. The problem is not that we don't have love—the problem is they don't have truth!

The prophet said in Isaiah 8:20, "*If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" There is no truth in them, because the truth about grace is: "*For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*" (Titus 2:11-12).

When we preach about grace, we have to be in balance. We understand grace is God's unmerited favor that we do not deserve, but for Jesus' sake, He freely gives it to us. That's one side of the coin, and when we receive this unmerited, amazing grace to be saved, it requires something of us. It teaches us that in this world, we are to deny ungodliness; we are to deny worldly lusts and live soberly, which means *to be on guard, to be vigilant and watchful*. This is

what Peter said: *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom you resist steadfast in the faith, knowing these same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world”* (1Pet.5:8-9). True ministers of God preach grace, but they preach it in balance.

Grace Out of Balance

Paul trained Timothy how to preach: *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive (argue, debate); but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach and patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will”* (2Tim.2:24-26). Timothy, co-minister with Paul, became the pastor of the church of Ephesus. One of his qualifications was to be *skilled in teaching*, and it is still a qualification for pastors today. Many do not understand:

Not all teachers are called to be pastors. But all pastors are called to be teachers. This disqualifies many, because one can be a good preacher, but that’s not enough to be a pastor. This is where some get messed up. They think because they’re a good preacher, and they have a good

anointing when they preach, they are called to pastor. But when it comes to teaching the doctrines of the Church, and applying these teachings into counseling people in their personal lives by the Word of God, and detecting and warning the flock of Satan’s snares, they lack training. Paul said that those who are snared *oppose themselves*, and they need to be brought to the place *they acknowledge it, so they can repent!* Only by acknowledging the truth can they *recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will.* A qualified pastor/teacher is necessary to instruct them with skill and patience.

How can a Christian be taken captive by the devil at the devil’s will? Because they have fallen into a snare, and the snares of Satan are many and various. A skillful pastor/teacher is be able to instruct them by Scripture to show them— they are not opposing him, *but themselves*, because obviously they are in the snare of the devil. Somewhere they opened a door that allowed Satan to come in. It could be false doctrine, problems in their marriage, their finances, their personal conduct, or with their family. Satan comes many different ways, and it is the responsibility of the pastor/teachers to reach that person by opening up the Scriptures. When they see their error, they can acknowl-

edge the truth.

Call Sin What It Is

How does one acknowledge the truth? By calling sin what it is. It's not just a mistake, or a weakness, or a character flaw. You have to call it what the Bible calls it. If it's sexual sin, you have to call it sin. If it's spiritual pride, you have to call it sin. Once you acknowledge the truth and call sin what it is, then you repent, and you will get out of Satan's snare. Nothing makes me happier than when I see someone recover out of the snare of the devil! God is the God of restoration. He can take those experiences and make you the wiser for it. Maybe someday you'll get to help someone else, because you'll be able to identify the snare the enemy is setting for them. You can say, "Brother/Sister, can I talk to you from an honest heart? I don't tell my business to everybody, but I believe this will help you, because it's exactly the snare the devil made for me, and I fell in it." When you see a flirtation is going beyond attraction, and is becoming salacious, and is leading to sexual sins of fornication or adultery, you can step in to say, "What I'm seeing here is more than friendly Christian fellowship. The devil is setting you up to be snared. Stop before you fall into it."

Everything Paul wrote to

Timothy dealt with balance, as in 1 Timothy 4:13-16, "*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*" (elders and pastors).

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

I have had the Holy Spirit remind me of this often. I have to continually meditate on these things and give myself to reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Let me say, you can tell when a preacher does this; when he/she is in the Word. When they get in the pulpit, you'll be able to hear the power of the truth in their preaching. You can also tell if they haven't. They may have a nice message, but it'll be shallow. There's only one way to get deeper, and that's how Paul said. You have to give attention to reading and meditating on the Word. You have to make doctrine your focus. I listen to other preachers to feed my soul, and sometimes I pick up nuggets from them. The Holy Spirit will take a nugget and personalize it to me. I always like to say, "*I pentecostalize it.*" From it will usually grow a whole message that the Spirit reveals to me.

But there is no substitute for reading the Word myself. You should listen to good preaching on CDs and TV and radio, but they are no substitute for reading the Word.

Paul said to give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. Herein is balance: Exhortations make us feel good, and are what most ministers who are under the authority of a pastoral ministry will give. They build up the flock and strengthen them by the Word. However, those in leadership positions not only must have exhortation, but *doctrine*. If they have not neglected to give attention to this, when they get in the pulpit, *their profiting—progress, advancement will be evident to all*. Most important, they will save themselves (I am going to make Heaven!) and save those that hear them. I want to save myself, but I want to save you too! Of course, I mean this in the sense that Paul meant it: *The Word we preach will save you*.

Tares Are Tricky

In the Middle East, the tare is a type of grass called **DARNEL**. It grows with the wheat and looks exactly like the wheat in the early stages. The similarity between the darnel and the wheat is so great, in some regions it's referred to it as *false wheat*. This false wheat bares identical resemblance to the wheat until the head of the grain appears. At this stage, the wheat is

the color brown, and the darnel is black. The seeds of the darnel are poisonous. When eaten by birds and other beasts of the field, or even humans, they cause intoxication, bringing on vertigo, dizziness and vomiting. It can even progress to the point of convulsions. Barn owls are apt to eat these, and it causes them to have vertigo. Imagine a bird with vertigo trying to fly. Vertigo is extreme dizziness where you are off-balance, everything is spinning, and you can't walk straight. When severe, you become nauseated and

“It is why we have to put up with some hypocrites in the church!”

often vomit. The poisonous seeds not only can cause convulsions, but it can be fatal.

What causes it to be poisonous? Somewhere in its growth, it was infected by a fungus. The fungus affects the darnel, but not the wheat. (Are you on another track with me in the Spirit?) There's something about the wheat; it's hardy enough that it does not succumb to the fungus. The darnel succumbs to the fungus which corrupts it and causes it to produce poisonous black seeds. In the parable, Jesus said that the servants wanted to go and rip it up and get rid of it. He said, “No, because when you rip up the tares,

you will also rip up some wheat.”

Saints, as much as it pains me to say this, *It is why we have to put up with some hypocrites in the church!* Until their black hearts are revealed for what they are; until their evil fruit is manifest that all can see what it is, we sometimes have to put up with them. In some cases, we will have to put up with them until the harvest, when Jesus will send His angels, and they will separate the tares from the wheat. We don't want to take the risk of ripping up a tender little wheat plant. Baby Christians and young Christians don't understand all spiritual things, and there might be some things they are not mature enough to handle. I have to be careful when someone asks me (outside my church): “Do you watch a certain preacher on TV?”, and I say, “No.” When they go on to say how much they love their preaching, if I think this person is too immature spiritually to understand why I don't watch them, because I don't believe their message is balanced, I won't tell them. Now, if the preacher in question overtly preaches false doctrine, that's another thing, and it is my responsibility to alert them.

We're talking about when they *look like wheat*, when they *sound like wheat*, but are not in balance. Now if they come right out and say something against Scripture, I'll speak up for the truth. I must

be led by the Spirit lest I should rip up a tender wheat plant. If they are sincere and are mature in the Word, they will see it for themselves. Sadly, the problem is, in many churches the people are only fed pabulum. They are not getting the meat of the Word; therefore, they are easily tricked by the cunning of the darnel. Sometimes we must put up with hypocrites, *but beware, hypocrites! Beware, false prophets! You are not fooling the mature wheat! The real saints of God are not being fooled. You might fool the world. You might fool those who have a shallow foundation, but not the mature wheat!*

God knows who's a seed and who's a weed. Paul said in 2Timothy 2:19, *“Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are his. And, let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*

It's not my job as a preacher to separate. It's my job to preach the truth, *line upon line and precept upon precept*, and straight down the middle. It's my job to warn: “Beware of the tares! Beware of the poisonous seeds!” Jesus said, *“Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but on the inside they are ravening wolves....A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree*

that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them" (Mt.7:15-20). Not by their charisma or fair speeches, but their fruit.

Many preachers don't preach on Hell anymore. You can go to some churches 52 Sundays in a row and never hear a message on Hell. I've heard preachers who were cornered by the media, who asked, "*Do you believe people will go to Hell?*" They responded, "Well, you know, it's my job to preach love. We don't judge anyone; we just love them to Jesus, and we don't talk about those things, because it's our job to love them." When they ask, "*Didn't Jesus teach about Hell?*", they respond, "You know, we just feel that God has called us to preach love."

I am not remiss to preach about Hell. I can't know for sure, because I have never been there, but I see enough in Scripture, and mainly Jesus speaking it, to know that Hell is unimaginably horrific. Jesus spoke more on Hell than Heaven. Hell is so terrible that He said, "*If your right eye offends you (causes you to sin), pluck it out; for it is better for you that one of your members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into Hell. If your right hand offends you, cut it off....*" (Mt.5:29-30). What was Jesus saying? Hell is a terrible place,

and you don't want to go there! And you don't want anyone to go to Hell! That's why I'm not ashamed, nor afraid to speak on Hell.

When I am asked to do a funeral service, I guarantee you, I will talk about Hell. At a funeral, you have a captive audience, and it's one of the few times when people who ordinarily never go to church are there. They may never hear it again, and they need to know if they are not right with God. If the deceased is someone they want to see again, they need to get right, so they can meet them in Heaven. Some may say, "Ooooh—preach Hell at a funeral?" Absolutely! It's the best opportunity, because people are thinking about mortality and the fact that one day they will be the ones in the casket.

They need to understand that there is only one way to Heaven and it is through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 14:6, "*I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man comes unto the Father; but by me.*" The Bible says, "*It appointed unto every man once to die, but after that is the judgment*" (Heb. 9:27). Of course, I do not ignore the family's grieving, and to them I speak words of comfort, and the hope of Heaven and seeing their loved one again, and what a day of rejoicing that's going to be!

Jesus never minced words

when speaking of Hell or hypocrites, and neither should we. He said that if you are not bringing forth good fruit worthy of repentance, you will be cast into the fire, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. We've got to warn people. I ask you: *Where are the warners today?* People are being intoxicated by the poisonous tares of the adversary, and there is little sound doctrine to counteract it. Paul said to the Ephesian elders: "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27). This verse summarizes my mission in a nutshell. I am not going to fail to declare the *whole* counsel of God, *all* the counsel of God. I'm going to preach about Heaven and what a wonderful reunion we're going to have. And I am going to warn of Hell and what a terrible place it is.

Wolves at the Door

Paul continued, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the*

space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (vv.28-32).

Paul told the elders that once he left, certain people, whose ambition was to draw disciples to themselves, would see it as an opportunity to snatch some of the flock. Some would arise out of their own ranks—*tares!* Others would be wolves from without. Paul was saying: "You need to step up to the plate! Step up to the challenge! I am turning it over to you; now you feed the flock; watch over them, and watch out for the wolves, because they will come sniffing at the door. You have to *watch* and *warn*." How do you do this? "*I commend you to the word of God.*"

Where are *the warners* in the church today? Where are *the watchmen*? God told Ezekiel that the children of Israel would go into captivity for their disobedience, and He said: "*I have made you a watchman on the wall.*" God was clear: If you see the enemy, and you blow the trumpet to warn the people, so they have time to get ready for the battle, you will have the blessing and the victory. If you see the enemy, and you fail to blow the trumpet, and the people aren't ready, and the enemy comes in and kills them, their blood will be on your hands" (Ref.

Ezek.33:1-9). God lamented, “*I sought for a man to make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none*” (22:30) I believe today God is looking for those who will take a place on the wall and say, “*Lord, here am I.*”

The Parable of the Seed last month, see page 15, or go to FIA archives at www.soundofffaith.org

A Prayer of Petition

May our prayer be: “Lord, make us *watchmen!* Lord, make us *warners!* Lord, give us boldness; give us wisdom to stand against political correctness. We are not afraid of persecution, of mockery from the world. We want to deliver the Word that will save people from the eternal damnation of Hell.

“Lord, that our churches would be lighthouses in our cities; that our lights would shine brighter in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation, so we can draw people who are hungry for the Word and who want to live according to the Gospel. Bring in people who want more than pabulum, more than a 30 minute-feel-good message on Sunday, but are hungry for the meat and potatoes of Scripture and doctrine, so they will be strong *warriors* and *watchmen* and *warners*, in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

And now I commend them to you, Lord. They are your sheep. Strengthen them, and make them fruitful to bring forth many lambs into the flock.

Please Note: If you missed