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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 24 – At The End Of The Age

THURSDAY

OPEN

Come with me my friend to the synagogue in Nazareth and let's sit at the feet of Jesus and let's listen to the parables that He tells about the kingdom of heaven, so that you might understand, Beloved, the importance of righteousness and so that you might understand what's going to happen at the very end of the age when God sends His angels to separate the good and the wicked.

PART ONE

I'm standing in a synagogue in the village of Nazareth. This is where Jesus came after He left the house where He was teaching on the parables of the kingdom. And since we didn't finish the parables of the kingdom of heaven, that's what I want to do. Well Matthew chapter 13, we've been looking at the parables of the kingdom. We've looked at the parable of the wheat and the tares and Jesus has explained the wheat and the tares to the people. He

has explained in verse 40, **“So ...as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.” (Matthew 13:40)** Now I want you to make sure, and this is why I went back to that verse, I want you to make sure that you mark that phrase, **“at the end of the age.”** Jesus is telling what’s going to happen when He comes and reigns as King of kings, how the wheat and the tares are going to be separated by the angels, how the tares are going to be taken and they are going to be burned up with fire and how the wheat is going to be gathered into His barn. He wants us to understand that when you look at people and they profess to belong to the kingdom of heaven, not everyone who says that they believe in Jesus Christ really and truly believes in Jesus Christ. He goes on to say in verse 41 that, **“The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun....” (Matthew 13:41-43)** And what He’s doing in this passage, He’s quoting Daniel chapter 12, verse 3 where it talks about how [“Those who have insight will shine brightly like the stars of the heaven.”] (PARAPHRASE, Daniel 12:3) And so He says, **“[And] then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:43)** Listen very carefully. Now remember: He wants people to understand that just because these men are scribes, just because these men are Pharisees, just because they are religious rulers, it does not mean that they are genuine followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus is showing us that there is a difference. Then in verse 44 it says, **“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” (Matthew 13:43)** Now Jesus is not going to give us an explanation of this parable. He is not going to tell us this is what it means. And so people have pondered: What does it mean? And some believe

that that treasure, because God calls Israel the treasure of His possession, that that treasure is Israel, and that the man that finds that treasure and hides it and then goes and sells all that he has where he hid the treasure that that man is a picture of Jesus Christ. And yet, I believe that if you take this in context that that does not fit. I believe you're having to do too much to the parable. You're having to assume too much. What is he saying? He's telling us what the kingdom of heaven is like. And He's showing us, I believe, and I'm telling you, I believe at this point He's telling us that the kingdom of heaven is a treasure. It is a treasure. And listen, when you find that treasure, then you pay the price for that treasure. Now some would say, but the kingdom of heaven has good seed and it has tares and so therefore it can't mean that. Well what does it mean? We really don't actually know. But I will tell you this, in the light of everything that Jesus teaches about following Him, He makes it very clear that He is to have the priority and He is to have the priority over every other relationship, [that if anyone is going to come after Him they need to deny themselves. They need to take up their cross. They need to follow Him.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 16:24) In other words, it is worth your whole life to follow Him. ["He who saves his life shall lose it. He who loses his life for My sake and the gospels shall find it."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 10:39) Let's read on to the next parable. He goes on to say in verse 45, "[And] **again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and [he] bought it.**" (Matthew 13:45-46) Now some will tell you, okay, you take a pearl. How do you get a pearl? You get a pearl because there is an irritation in an oyster. There is something that is bothering that oyster. And because of that irritation it begins to build up this secretion around it until a beautiful pearl is found, and that's where the pearl comes, the pearl comes from the suffering of the oyster. So they say the treasure in the field is a picture of Israel. The "pearl of great price" is a picture of the church. And that the one that goes and sells all that he has in

order to buy this pearl of great price is a picture of Jesus Christ. Again, Jesus does not explain it. But let's just stop and look at it. And it says, **"...The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls."** (Matthew 13:45) He's going all over looking for fine pearls. **"And upon finding one pearl of great value..."** it says, **"...he went and sold all that he had and bought it."** (Matthew 13:46) We don't know what it means, but I will tell you what it means to me, that once I find out that the kingdom of God is at hand, that we are to repent because the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God is at hand. I know that I want the kingdom of God. I want the kingdom of heaven. I've been seeking and I've been seeking for something of great value. I have found it and it is worth selling my all in order to get it. And that's what you find these people doing. You find the tax collectors. You find the sinners. You find the prostitutes. You find the others and they finally find what they are searching for and they leave all and they follow Jesus. When Jesus called His disciples what does He do with Andrew and Peter? He says, **"...Follow Me...."** (Matthew 4:19) They leave their nets and they follow Him. ["You find that He tells the sons of Zebedee, 'Come,' and they leave their boat and they leave their father and they follow Him."] (PARAPHRASE 4:21-22) The kingdom of heaven, however you want to interpret it, Beloved, we're not going to part company over it; but the kingdom of heaven is worth your all. And then He goes on to say, **"[And] the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it...on the beach; and...sat down and gathered the good fish into [the] containers...."** (13:47-48) So they would sit right down and they would take that net, they would get in that net and they would take those fish and they'd throw the good fish into containers. And then what does it say? It says, **"[And the]...but the bad they [just] threw [it] away."** (Matthew 13:48) They separated the good from the bad. Now remember Jesus has said that men are trying to take the kingdom by violence. (See Matthew 13:36-43) They're

trying to get into it in this way. So we have a mixture of people who say that they belong to the kingdom of heaven. It says, **“So it will be at the end of the age....” (Matthew 13:49)** So there’s that phrase again, **“So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous.” (Matthew 13:49)** Now watch the division. And this is the word, “righteous” that you want to mark again. Remember we’re marking “righteous” and we’re marking “righteousness” all throughout the Scriptures. So once again you have the wicked separated from the righteous. When Jesus Christ came the Pharisees and the scribes assumed that the kingdom of heaven belonged to them. They assumed that it belonged to them simply because they were of Abraham’s seed. We are of Abraham’s seed. And you find them saying, “Do you think that we are sinners?” Let me take you to John chapter 8 and just show you this in another gospel. In John chapter 8 they’re trying to kill Him. And Jesus has just said, **“...If the Son makes you free, you [shall] be free indeed.”** He says, **“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.”** He says, **“I speak the things which I have seen with My Father....”** [“The things that I am giving you I’ve heard from My Father.”] (PARAPHRASED, John 8:38) He says, **“...Therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.” (John 8:36-38)** He’s making a division here. **“[And] they answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’” (John 8:39)** Can’t you see that contest going on in a synagogue? Can’t you see them sitting on the steps there and discussing and reasoning from the Law and talking about the things that belong to the kingdom of heaven? And it says, **“They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ [And] Jesus said to them, ‘If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham.’” (John 8:39)** Now remember who is Jesus? He is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the Son of David. He is the Son of Abraham. He is Abraham’s child. But He says, **“...If you are Abraham’s [child, then you need to] do the deeds of**

Abraham.” (John 8:39) And what was that? And whose father was their father? We’ll talk about it in just a moment.

PART TWO

Welcome back to the synagogue here in Nazareth. Remember we’re studying Matthew, but I have you in the gospel of John where Jesus is in kind of a verbal contest with those who declare themselves to be sons of Abraham. And my point is that just because they were born a Jew, they thought they had a right to the kingdom of heaven. They thought because they were of Abraham’s seed, then they had an automatic entrance into the kingdom of heaven. So Jesus says to them, **“...If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who ...told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father.”** “[And] they said to Him, ‘We [are] not born of fornication; [we have true Jewish blood in us,] we have one Father: [and that is] God.’ [And] Jesus said ..., ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God ...I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I’m saying? It’s because you cannot hear My word.’” (John 8:39b-43) Now what does He say in the parables? He says, **“...He [that] has [an ear], let him hear.”** (Matthew 13:43b) Oh, they were hearing the words, but they were not hearing and they were not understanding. He says, **“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 [he] does not stand in the truth because there’s no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and a father of lies.”** He says, **“But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.”** (John 8:44-45) So remember, He was giving these parables. And only those who belong to God could understand the parables. Those who heard but did not hear, those who saw but did not

proceed could not understand those parables. And it was true, just as Isaiah had prophesied, and that's what He quotes earlier in Matthew chapter 13. So He says this is what's going to happen at the end of the age with the dragnet. **"...The angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** He says, **"Have you understood all these things?"** **"[And] they said to Him, 'Yes.'"** (Matthew 13:49b-51) Now He's talking to His disciples. **"[And] they said ..., 'Yes.'"** (Matthew 13:51) **"We've got the point. It is worth our all. We are good soil. It's going to fall on good ground. It is going to bear fruit. We are wheat. We are not tares. We know what's going to happen at the end of the age."** Isn't that awesome! It's just like the wheat and tares. The angels separate the wheat from the tares. **"And Jesus said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven....'"** (Matthew 13:52a) You want to mark "kingdom of heaven" again. **"...Is like [the] head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."** (Matthew 13:52b) What is He telling us? There were some scribes that believed, that listened and became a disciple, a follower, a learner of Jesus Christ, and when he did, he took out of his treasure. He took out of all of his knowledge of the Scriptures that he had inscribed and he remembered those truths and he **"[brought] out of [those] treasures things new and old."** (13:52c) And then in verse 53 it says, **"[And] when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there."** (13:53) He left that house. And then it says, **"[And] He came to His hometown...."** (13:54a) Now Capernaum was His hangout. Capernaum was where He moved after Nazareth. But He comes back to His hometown. How do we know that He's talking about Nazareth when He does not mention Nazareth, rather than Capernaum? Well watch what it said. And this is why context is important. And, by the way, before I continue, remember this marks a new segment in the gospel of Matthew. Because it says, **"When [He] had finished these**

parables, **He departed from there.” (Matthew 13:53)** Every time when He finishes a specific teaching it marks a new segment. He uses the same phraseology, and so Matthew has a pattern. It says, **“He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished....” (Matthew 13:54a)** It’s the same word that says that they were amazed when they came down from hearing the Sermon on the Mount. I mean they were struck up. They were laid flat by these truths. And it says, **“...They were astonished, and said, ‘Where did this man get [His] wisdom and these miraculous powers? Is [this] not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother...Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us...?’ ” (Matthew 13:54b-56a)** Now where would they all be? Not in Capernaum. They would be in Nazareth, Jesus’ hometown. And it says, [“Where then did this man get all these things? He’s just an ordinary man. We know His brothers. We know His sisters. We know His mother. We know His father. You know, this is the carpenter’s son, the carpenter’s son. We know where He’s from. How did He get all this wisdom?”] (PARAPHRASED, Matthew 13:55-56) And it says, **“And they took offense at Him....” (Matthew 13:57a)** Why? It’s a little bit of pride. This is just a common boy. This is the boy that grew up. This is the boy that played in the streets of Nazareth. This is the little boy that stood and worked with His father. This is the boy that had all these brothers and sisters. **“And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.’ And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.” (13:57-58)** Now that’s the end of the account of what happened in Nazareth. He has given them two chances and they have not received either one of them. Now Matthew wants us to know what happened to Herod and what happened to John the Baptist. **“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, and [he] said to his servants....” (Matthew 14:1-2a)** And this is Herod Antipas, this is Herod,

who is later going to try Jesus, said, **“And said to his servants, ‘This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that’s why [his] miraculous powers are at work in him.’”** (Matthew 14:2) He heard what Jesus was doing and he said, [“John’s risen from the dead.”]

(PARAPHRASE, Matthew 14:2) Well this is the Herod that had John put to death. **“For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had been saying... ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’”** (14:3-4)

Remember John was proclaiming righteousness. And it says, **“Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. [And] having been prompted by her mother, she said, ‘Give ... here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.’ [And] although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests.”** (14:5-9) Pressured by the crowd, pressured by the peers, **“He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. And his head was brought [out] on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. His disciples [went] and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.”** (Matthew 14:10-12)[“And Jesus had to go away and be alone.”] (PARAPHRASED, Matthew 14:13)

Beloved, these are the parables of the kingdom. And this is the conflict that those of the kingdom have with the world when they stand for righteousness. Just remember this. You can expect conflict, but there is an end of the age coming, Beloved. And the wheat will be gathered into His barn. And **“...the righteous will shine forth as the sun [and as the stars of the heaven].”** (Matthew 13:43a) Persevere. He is coming.