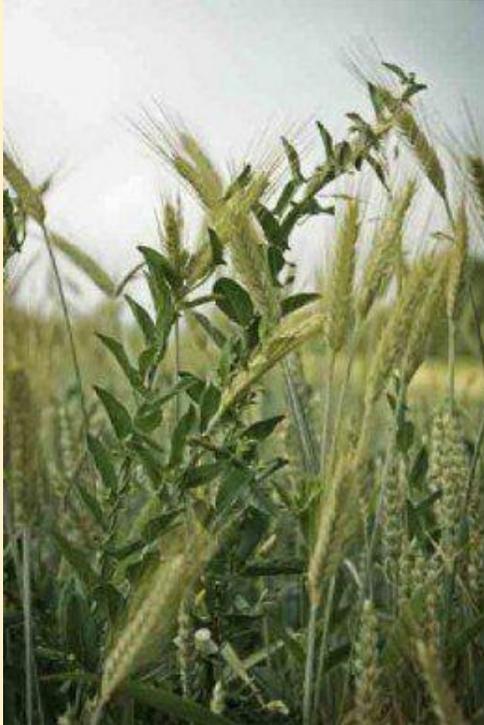


It's Bible Story Time! With Pastor Ian Goligher

Today's story is based on the parable of the Wheat and the Tares taken from Matthew 13



Have you seen a harvest field this Thanksgiving? Do you know where wheat comes from? You will find lots of it in the silos at the shipyard in North Vancouver. Wheat is Canada's biggest crop and grows all across this vast country. The prairies are a huge vast sea of wheat. Farmers grow it, railways bring it to Vancouver and ships carry millions of tons of wheat over the seas of the world for millions of people to have bread to eat.

Wheat has been grown in the world for thousands of years. God made the first wheat, and its seeds have multiplied over and over and over for 6,000 years.

The Lord Jesus told a parable of a wheat farmer that had a big problem.

Firstly, let me tell you how they took great pains to prepare the fields for sowing.

- The workers needed to plough up the soil to make it loose and free from rocks or stumps.
- The soil needed to be as fine as dust.
- The weather needed to be good with just some rain, but not too much rain or the soil gets too sticky.
- The seed needed to be sown all over the field with some seeds sown every few inches. Then the soil would be flattened in to put the seed to bed so the seeds are covered with the soil. In a few days, the seeds would come to life and grow roots into the soil to help it grow fast and tall. The farmer and his workers would take good care of the plants and see that they grow strong and safe.

Then one day the workers complained to the farmer, asking, **Did you not give us good seed to sow in the field?** We see these tares growing in the field and there are hundreds and thousands of them. The farmer said, No, no, the seed I gave you was good. It was the very best. An enemy has come at night and sown little bad seeds all over the field. Now these evil tares are growing. They were enemies to the wheat, like weeds and were a waste of sunshine, a waste of water and a waste of time. They should be gone.

So the workers asked the farmer, Shall we pull up the tares and get rid of them? Surprisingly, the farmer said, No, leave them alone. Let them grow in the field with the wheat. Let them grow together until the harvest time. Wow! That seemed odd advice. These tares were getting ugly and horrible to look at.

But the farmer said, If we pull the tares up by the root then we will damage the roots of the wheat, and we don't want that.

So, for months the workers in the field had to put up with the ugly tares. And the nearer the time got to harvest they were really horrible things. The tares mocked the wheat plants which suffered great grief from the bulging thick growth of the tares. If the wheat were people they would not be happy.

But the farmer's plan was to wait until the harvest time. Then the tares would not be happy, for they would be gathered into bundles. The workers would go through the fields, and pluck them up one-by-one and carry them into a heap. They would become a bonfire. When the last one was put on top of the pile of tares the workers set fire to them and burned them. The smoke rose up in the field. The fire crackled out of a red hot blaze until the whole pile was reduced to ashes.

Then the workers would harvest the wheat. What joy that was to gather the wheat into the farmer's barn. Harvest was a joyful and a happy day, when all the workers were singing happily.

That parable has a very powerful lesson built into it. The wicked people of this world are like the tares, and God allows wicked people space to grow and have their own wicked ways. Yes, God gives them freedom to do evil things. Wicked and bad people in this world only

think that they can get away with whatever they like. They think that they can get rich without God, get powerful without God and mock good people the way bad people mock Christians, calling them goody goodies. But they need to know that there is a harvest day coming when the wicked will be destroyed.

God's great plan is to gather Christians into heaven in the same way that the farmer gathered the wheat into his barn. If you are saved and made good and clean through faith in the saving power of the Lord Jesus, then on the judgment day you will be saved and brought into heaven.

Which are you today - a wheat or a tare? What is your destiny going to be? It is better to suffer in this world as a wheat to be finally gathered into heaven, than to be a tare to be marked for judgment.