

Study Notes Sunday 12 February 2017

Matthew 12:24-46 Good and Bad – Tim Blackburn

1. Read the parable of the wheat and the weeds vv24- 29 and Jesus' explanation vv 36 -43. Consider the issues involved in sharing such a stark message of judgment with children (as in Sunday morning's video); or with a mixed congregation on a Sunday morning (is the wicked being thrown into the fire, the first message we want our visitors to hear?). In our well-meaning attempts to be accessible to a post Christian audience have we gone soft on judgment? How can we strike the right note?
2. Consider the significance of Jesus' telling the parable to the crowds and his overt explanation of the parable to his disciples privately. Why do you think they needed a special explanation?
3. What does Jesus' explanation tell us about his identity and role and that of the devil? What does this mean for us?
4. Is the parable of the wheat and the weeds a good news story or a horror story? Read vv 31-32 What do we think this is about? How does it encourage us? Is it simply a Christian version of 'Mighty oaks from little acorns grow' or is there more than that?
5. Tim suggested that the parable of the yeast v33 speaks about the influence of Christians in the world. What are the implications of this for us? Is this daunting or encouraging or a little bit of both? How can we encourage one another in our influential role as yeast? The wheat and weeds grow together in the first parable. Does the parable of the yeast give us hope for the weeds?
6. vv44 and 45 speak of the kingdom as treasure and as a pearl of great price. Do we still see it that way or has over familiarity dimmed our perception? How can we rekindle and foster the sense of wonder and treasure that we have in Christ?
7. What practical lessons for our own witnessing may we learn from Jesus' constant use of parables in his communication of the gospel? Is this a case of raising questions to which Jesus is the answer? See 1 Peter 3:15.

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