

Weeds, Seeds, and Yeast

Learning

Introducing the Parables (some example content you can engage with to prep and/or as a group)

- **Read Matthew 13:24-43**
- **Themes:** Jesus just told a parable about four soils and most of them yielded poor growth. Here he is definitely shifting gears in the imagery and meaning, but there is a unifying theme across these three parables: *God's Kingdom will grow despite an often small and unpromising start.*
- **Culture:** Notice his use of culturally masculine imagery (farming) and feminine imagery (baking).
- **Interesting Word:** The verb "let" (NIV) in verse 13:30 is *Aphete* in greek. Half the time it is used in the NT it means to let, permit, or leave, but just as often it means to forgive. Perhaps Jesus alludes to this here in the parable and lives it as he forgives those crucifying Him (Luke 23:34).
- **Quote for reflection:**

"It's interesting, isn't it, to reflect on ways in which Christians and non-Christians likewise appear superficially similar. There's nothing in our physical appearance that necessarily changes when we become followers of Jesus. And both because Christians remain sinners throughout their lives and because non-Christians often do many good things, it's often impossible to single out Jesus' followers in a crowd even by observing their public behavior. It's also interesting to reflect on ways in which Christians perennially have longed for the premature destruction of evil people in their world. Jesus' idea of letting good and evil coexist side by side, even at times seemingly intertwined until his final judgment, doesn't sit well with our desire to take God's justice into our own hands."
Craig Blomberg (121)

Dialogue Questions (some example questions for this content above)

- What are the dominating ideas in each parable?
- What themes, if any, do you see between all three?
- What insights do you learn from Jesus' explanation of the parable (v. 36-43)?
- Does the explanation given align with the emphasis of the parables themselves?
- Do you agree with Blomberg's quote? Is there a noticeable difference between apprentices of Jesus and everyone else? Should there be? What about his notion of letting evil exist? Is that what the parable teaches?

Implication Questions (some example questions/challenges that engage real life now)

- How do these parables make you feel? Do they encourage or discourage you? Why?
- Does this parable teach us anything about the presence and nature of evil? And how we are to live in spite of it? Does it shed any light on 'the problem of Evil'?
- Consider allowing people space for meditation and prayer over the verses. He prompts his listeners "Whoever has ears, let them hear." What is Jesus asking you to hear from this parable?