

Trojan Horses Transcription

Trojan Horses - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 - Nate Heitzig

Â [MUSIC PLAYING]

Â Welcome to Calvary Church. Did you know, out of all Jesus's teachings recorded in scripture, one third are in storytelling form. Jesus was a master storyteller. And in this series, Pastor Nate explores some of his most profound parables, stories that make spiritual truths relatable to everyone. Here's Pastor Nate.

Â [MUSIC PLAYING]Â

Good morning, church. It's good to see you. We've missed you all week. It is so good to see your faces. I hope you know that we the staff, the pastors, the volunteers here at Calvary, we love you, and it is such a joy to be in church together.

Â Psalm 133 verse 1 says, "behold how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity." And in a world that has disunity, a world divided, it is good to be in the church united, amen? That we come together regardless of language or tongue, race or creed, regardless of political affiliations. We find commonality under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, who rose from the dead. It is good to be together. If you believe that, give me a shout of praise.

Â [AUDIENCE CHEERING]Â

Turning your Bible to Matthew, chapter 13, we're going to be continuing in our series Once Upon A Time this morning, as we've been looking at these parables, the kingdom parables of Matthew, chapter 13. We're going to be in verses 24 to 30 this morning, as we look at the parable of the wheat and the tares, for a message that I've called this morning Trojan Horses.

Â About 15 years ago, I had the chance the privilege to visit the ancient city of Troas, or Troy as most of you would know it. And in the ancient city of Troas, they have all the ruins, they have the walls. But they also have a recreation, a model of the mythological Trojan horse.

Â Now, in every city, in every ancient city, the most important structure wasn't the palace. The most important structure wasn't the storehouses or the temple. Anyone want to take a guess at what the most important structure of every ancient city was?

Â The walls.

Â The walls. The walls were the most important part of every city. In the Book of Nehemiah, he journeys to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and the gates. It says in Nehemiah 1, his heart was grieved. He was sad because he got reports that the walls were torn down and the gates had been burned.

Â See, the walls were the protection for the city. As a matter of fact, without the walls, there would be no city, because it would just be constantly ransacked and destroyed. In ancient times, destroying the walls and the gates was paramount to victory, because if you can't get in, you can't win.

Â That's an important principle we need to understand. It's an important principle we need to recognize in our spiritual lives as well. If you can't get in, you can't win. But let me ask you a question. What do you do when the walls and the gates are too strong and you can't break them down? What do you do when the external forces are impenetrable, and you can't get inside the walls?

Â Well, in The Odyssey by Homer, the Greeks, after an utterly fruitless ten-year battle to get into the city of Troy-- they were trying to break down the walls, they were trying to barge their way inside, they couldn't make their way in. The Trojans perceived that they are close to victory, and so the Greeks decide that they're going to take a different tactic. They build a Trojan horse, and they leave it at the gates of the city,

and they get in their ships, and they pretend that they have left in defeat.

Â They get in all their boats. They go away. And the Trojans decide to take this beautiful wooden Trojan horse as a trophy of their victory inside their walls. But as we all know, the Greeks weren't admitting defeat. And at night, as the city sleeps, the Greek forces creep out of the Trojan horse, and they open the gates to the city, and the Greek army enters in and destroys the city from the inside out, thus ending the war.

Â Well, church, I have some good news and I have some bad news for you this morning. We have to remember that God is at work. God is gardening. As we saw last week, God is in the process of going through his garden, going through the world, and he is sowing seeds. He is doing some work. He is doing some gardening. He is pulling out some boulders. He is pulling out some weeds. He is ripping out some stumps. That's good news.

Â But guess what? Satan is also doing some gardening. For every boulder that God removes, Satan's throwing some rocks in the soil. For every weed and thorn that Jesus plucks, Satan is there sowing some bad seed back into the garden. God has always and will always be at work within our lives, convicting us of sin, drawing us to repentance, preparing the soil, raising us up and bringing much fruit from our lives.

Â But the devil is at work as well. The devil is trying to destroy everything that God plants. The devil is trying to bring in a counterfeit for every true work that God is doing. And this shows us that right up until the return of Jesus Christ, there is a spiritual battle that will be raging.

Â And last week, we learned that Satan's desire is to destroy the work of salvation before it ever has a chance to take root. That God is sowing seeds, trying to bring fruit and bring us to life, and Satan is there every step of the way trying to stop that from happening. But my question is, what happens when Satan can't destroy the work that God is doing?

Â What happens when the walls who are hearts, the fortifications to our life, the work that God has done is too strong for him to destroy? Well, today we see that Satan is in the business of using Trojan horses. If Satan can't tear down the walls, Satan's desire will be to come in disguise, to creep into our midst in the secret of night, only to open the gates and destroy us from the inside out.

Â Today we're going to see three things. We're going to see that the enemy wants in. Number two, we're going to see that if he can't beat us, he'll try to join us. And number three, we're going to see that the best way to spot a fake is to be real.

Â Let's read our text Matthew, chapter 13, verse 24 to 30, as we look at this parable of the wheat and the tares. Verse 24. "Another parable he put forth to them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who 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 grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

Â So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servant said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?

Â But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares, you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, first, gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them. But gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Â Let's stop there. We're going to read the interpretation of this parable in just a second. But the first point we see is that the enemy wants in. Now, the bulk of our message today will be on our second and third points. But this is a starting point that we need to understand before we can move on. And that is that the enemy wants in.

Â As we notice last week, Satan in the lives of every believer first tries to trip people up by blinding them to the truth. If God is sowing good seed, we need to remember there's snakes in the Garden. And Satan's desire will be to come in and pull that seed away before we ever have a chance to hear it and let it change our lives.

Â And if that doesn't work, he attacks by persecution and difficulty. Remember that we need to look out for rolling stones. There's things in our life that can creep into the garden in the soil that God is preparing, and can create shallow soil, so that while it might look like we spring up in life, those persecutions, those difficulties will stop it before it ever bears fruit.

Â And these are relatively direct attacks. And if those don't work, he tries to slowly choke out the person by the worries of life and the deceitfulness of riches. Remember, there be pirates. There are things that want to pirate your joy, pirate your peace, pirate your salvation, and squelch it out before you can ever truly bear forth fruit.

Â Now, in this parable, we see a much more subtle and yet extremely effective attack. And that is the attack of imitation. And see, I love that this passage-- we really need to read this parable as a continuation of the story that was before us last week. In the story before us last week, again, we have this master, this sower who is going through his garden and he is sowing seeds.

Â And again, some seeds land on hard soil. Some seeds land on shallow soil. Some seeds land on thorny, worldly soil. And some seeds land on receptive soil. And these seeds that land on the receptive soil, this garden begins to grow, begins to bear fruit, begins to be prosperous. And it's looking like a harvest is imminent.

Â And so Satan, since his first attack didn't work, since he wasn't able to stop us from growing, he instead decides to come in our midst and use the game of imitation. And in this parable, we really see two different sowings. Again, we see the sowing of the good seed, with the purpose of gathering a harvest by the owner.

Â But we also see an enemy, an enemy who comes in at night and sows a seed known as the tare, which historically would also be called a dandelion or a cockle. Now, what's important about these words, the tare, the dandelion the cockle, this is a seed. It's a true literal historical seed, that when it would spring up, when it would take root, what's important about it is that it was almost identical in look to what the actual wheat was.

Â It didn't look like a weed. It didn't look like thorns that we read about in our last parable. It looked exactly like wheat. It grew up, it sprouted up and had the same color. It was almost indistinguishable from the real thing to the naked eye.

Â And we see that this enemy, as he sows this seed at night, he does so without any hope of harvesting this dandelion. Rather, the sole goal of the enemy is to interfere with the wheat that has been planted by the master. That's the sole goal. The only purpose is to interfere with the real thing.

Â Realizing the seriousness-- the slaves that we read about here in Matthew chapter 13, realizing this, they decide and they ask the master if the master wants them to go back through the field and uproot all the tares from the wheat. Which if we're honest, sounds like a pretty good idea. Hey, it's been planted there to interfere, let us remove it.

Â But the master tells them, no. Because he points out that the plants would have already been so closely intertwined that the result was the wheat would be uprooted with the tare. Now, what does this all mean? Well, Jesus gives the interpretation in verse 36 to 43. So let's read that together.

Â And I want to point out something really unique and special in this passage. Look at verse 36. It says, "Then Jesus sent the multitudes away and went into the house. And his disciples came to him saying,

'Explain to us the parables, the parable of the tares of the field.'

Â And I love this because the disciples have been with Jesus all day. And he's been sharing parables. He's been sharing truths. He's been sharing these really incredible things that are life changing and impactful. And yet it shows that all day long the disciples have been wrestling with this story about the tares.

Â All day long, they've been sitting there thinking, what was up with that story of the tares? What did Jesus mean when he was talking to us about the tares? And I love that they have the freedom to come to Jesus without any fear of being shamed, and they're able to say, hey Jesus, can you explain to us what you meant in that parable of the tares?

Â And what I love about this is sometimes in Christianity, we think we have to understand everything, and we think that we have to pretend we understand everything. If we don't understand everything, that somehow we're going to be shamed by believers, or shamed by God if we don't get everything that's written down in this book.

Â But did you realize, God gives you the freedom to come to Him sometimes and say, hey Lord, I don't understand what you're saying. I don't understand what your Word says. That doesn't make sense to me. And the Bible says that God will reveal His Word to us. That's one of the roles of the Holy Spirit. As we're reading the Word of God, we ask God for an understanding and interpretation of His Word.

Â One of the prayers that I pray every time before I start studying, every time before I get on stage, is a prayer that David prayed. I say, Lord, reveal wondrous truths to me from your Word. God reveals His truths to us as we read His Word. And it's OK to let him know you don't understand.

Â It's OK to come to another believer and say, hey, can you help me understand this verse, because I don't quite get it. That's OK. That's good to do. And God will take time to reveal His Word. And that's what he does to His disciples. In verse 37, He continues. It says, "He answered and said to them, 'He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.'"

Â Again, we saw that last week. The field is the world. Also saw that last week. "The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom. But the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

Â Therefore, as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Â If you've ever been told the Bible doesn't talk about hell, read them this verse. It's pretty graphic. It doesn't just talk about separation. It says a furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. You know, I wonder if the disciples second guess themselves when they ask Jesus to explain this. I wonder if they said, man, Jesus, I wish I wouldn't have had the understanding of that parable.

Â But it's important that we understand it. Again, we see in the parable of the sower that Jesus is the sower of the seed. We are the seed. The field is the world, owned by God, in which we are planted. And in this world, God is flinging his seed, which are his children into the world, to preach the gospel, to live godly lives, to bear much fruit, to grow in our understanding.

Â But all the while, while Jesus is out there flinging His seed, trying to create a garden, the enemy wants into the garden, so that the enemy can steal, kill and destroy, and stop the master's plan. And if he can't knock down the walls, if he can't lure you away with the temptation of the deceitfulness of riches, with the worries of life, with persecution, if he can't pull away your understanding of the Word of God, then he will

try to sneak in and destroy us from the inside out.

Â Now, if you're like me, it's easy to let this make you a little bit paranoid. It's easy to read this and say, so wait a second, you're telling me everyone here isn't my friend. There's actually people in the church, there's people in the fold who were placed there by Satan? There's enemies inside the gates?

Â Now, should this cause us to walk around with a suspicious look on our face as we look at everybody. Are you a tare? Are you a tare? Who's a tare? Who's a tare? Who's wheat? Who's friend? Who's foe? Should we walk around like the Gospel Gestapo, with the light shining in people's eyes. Hey, read me a Bible verse, not from there, from memory. Right now. Come on, I got to make sure who's real and who's fake.

Â Is that what this should cause us to do? No. Jesus makes it clear, when his servants the angels come and say, hey Lord do you want us to go through the garden and pluck out the real from the fake? And Jesus says, no. Not until the end of the age until judgment day will I determine the real from the fake. Not until the final day will I go through and send you angels to pull out the real and pull out the fake and send them on their separate ways.

Â Jesus makes it clear we won't be able to distinguish or pass final judgment concerning the identity of who is real and who is fake. The danger is if we try, we can end up pulling out the genuine with the counterfeit. And I've seen this time and time in church. We believe it's our job to be sin sniffers. We believe it's our job to be Gospel Gestapo. We believe it's our job to find out who is real and who is fake.

Â And I've seen so many churches eat themselves from the inside out, because they end up damaging real believers who are sincere and love Jesus, because they've decided that it's their mission to be the ones who are reaping. It's their mission to be the ones who are expelling the fake. But it's not. It's not our job as the church to execute final judgment on anyone.

Â While on Earth, Jesus himself would never lift a finger against his enemies. To those who falsely accused him and sent him to the cross, he said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. In Romans 12:17, it says, do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Â Church, we aren't told to lash out in hate against our enemies. But Jesus tells us to love your enemies. You know, no doubt, when we get to heaven there's going to be three really big surprises. Number one, many of the people we expected to see won't be there. Number two, many of the people we never expected to see will be there. And number three, we're going to be there.

Â Those are going to be the three big surprises when we get to heaven. And the reality is, until we get to heaven, until the final day of judgment, we don't know who is real and who is fake. We can't see into their hearts. We can't see what God is doing. We can't see that growth that He's beginning to germinate. When someone comes forward, we don't know if it was a sincere admission to accept Jesus Christ. We can hope it is. We can pray it is. But we don't know.

Â We can see somebody who stands in a pulpit and preaches week in and week out. We can see someone who serves faithfully every single week and assume that they've got it all under control, that they understand everything. And yet we don't know. They might be faking it. We don't know.

Â Well, let's look at the devil strategy here at our second point. If he can't beat us, he'll try to join us. Look at verse 25. And let's continue. Verse 25. "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, sir, did you not so good seed in your field?"

Â You know, I like the idea that the angels maybe ask God that question as they look at the state of the

church today. Hey God, did you do what you meant to do? How then does it have tares? If you did what you meant to do, how is it so messed up?

Â "He said to them, an enemy has done this. The servant said to him, do you want us to go and gather them up? He said, no, lest you gather up the tares, you also uproot the wheat with them." Satan is a crafty foe. Again, he tries outward attacks, and that works with some. With some people, when they get attacked with persecution, when they get attacked with the deceitfulness of riches, when they get attacked with the worries of life, they give up their faith just like we saw last week in that story.

Â But for others of us most, likely most in this room, that persecution, those attacks, they don't drive us from the cross. They drive us to the cross. It gives us a deeper conviction, a deeper determination. Cast all your cares upon Him, for who He cares for you.

Â For a real believer, when Satan attacks with those outward blatant attacks, we easily can put up our guard. We can read the Word. We can rely upon our community and our connect group, and we can withstand those attacks. And so Satan changes his strategy, to something like, well, if you can't beat them, join them.

Â Church, we need to understand, Satan has his counterfeits with everything. Everything good that God creates, Satan has a counterfeit. Satan is like a flea market in Mexico. He's got a whole bunch of fakes, a whole bunch of things that look like the real thing. But when you get at home, it breaks a week later.

Â Satan has his counterfeits for everything God creates. Satan has a counterfeit for love. Satan has a counterfeit for marriage. Satan has a counterfeit for peace. He has a counterfeit for joy. He has a counterfeit for God's plan for your life.

Â He has a counterfeit everything. And his goal, once we're firmly rooted in God, is to make us buy into the counterfeit instead of the real thing. His goal is imitation. He has counterfeit Christians. In 2 Corinthians 11:26, it says, "I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, and in danger from false brothers."

Â Paul identifies the issue as carnality in 1 Corinthians 3, he says, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes. For you are yet carnal, for there is strife and envying and divisions among you, showing your carnality."

Â Carnality is an arrested state of spiritual development. Throughout this message, I'm going to use the word carnal believers to refer to these tares. But I want to be clear. I'm not referring to them as followers. They're believers in the sense that even the demons believe and tremble.

Â See, there are those among us who claim to believe. If you ask them if they're a Christian, they'll say yes. If you ask them if they believe that Jesus died and rose again, they'll say yes. They might be believers, but they are carnal believers. They are not followers. They are not allowing the word to change their life and change how they act, and change what they do. They are simply believers, carnal believers.

Â And just as a baby is dependent on others to feed him and care for him, so the carnal person is dependent on others for growth. And this is OK to begin with. When we first come to Christ as babes in Christ, we need people to help us grow. We need people to build us up and tell us what is right and what is wrong.

Â But what Paul is referring here is he says you are carnal even as babes. They're not babes, but they're still acting like babies. See, it's OK to be a baby, but you have to grow up at some point. You have to grow in your knowledge and understanding of God's Word, and you have to stop being a baby.

Â The carnal believer is experience oriented. Everything always has to be exciting. The more lights, the

more guests bands, the more programs, the more entertainment, the better. Now, those things aren't bad. But the problem is the second you crack open the Bible, they shy away.

Â They never develop a real hunger for the Word. They find the word of God and teaching boring. They always want shorter teachings, less Bible study. Carnal believers love Christian entertainment but they're not committed to Bible study. They always have time for pleasure but they never have time for prayer.

Â The carnal person tends to be a miserable person, because they can never have enough. And so they're always bummed out. They're always disappointed. We kind of talked about this idea last week. There's never a joy of the Lord upon them, but they're always miserable, and they're always making others around them miserable, because the thing that they claim to have received, they haven't really received.

Â They haven't received the thing that actually fills the void. They haven't received the thing that brings them satisfaction. They claim they have, but they haven't. And since they haven't, they're always miserable. They're always bummed out.

Â It doesn't matter how much of the world we get. We can never be happy. Again, we talked about this last week, this idea that even if you have everything, that's not going to make you happy. No, everything will just have you. You will be under the weight and the control of everything.

Â And so the carnal believer gets and has all these things, but they're not happy, because the only thing that can satisfy, a real relationship with Jesus, they haven't truly received. Tom Brady in an interview with Steve Kroft said, "Why do I have these Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me?"

Â I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, hey, man. This is what it is. I reached my goal my dream, my life. Me, I think, God, it's got to be more than this. I mean, this can't be all that it's cracked up to be. And Steve Kroft responded by asking, "What's the answer?" And Tom responded very simply, "I wish I knew. I wish I knew."

Â We know. It's the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's Jesus Christ that satisfies. It's Jesus Christ that causes you to find purpose and belonging and a plan for your life. And too many people are looking in the wrong place. And not just outside the church. Too many people in the church are looking in the wrong place.

Â When you know, you know. When you've experienced it, the true satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the water of life that quenches a thirst that you didn't even realize you had. When you know, when you've experienced it, you know. But when you don't know, you're always complaining. You're always bummed out. You're always searching. You're never satisfied.

Â There are others who believe a counterfeit gospel. Galatians 1:6 says, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel which is really no gospel at all." I had the privilege several years back to preach at one of the largest Christian camps in the country.

Â I'm not going to say where it is because I don't want to defame them. I've since had a conversation with the camp director that was very profitable. But I had a chance to go out to California and preach at this camp to 1,500 high school students. And it was such a unique, fun time. The first two nights went so good.

Â On the third night, they called it their salvation night, their decision night. And I did a Gospel message that I've delivered here at Calvary before. And I talked about sin. I talked about repentance. I talked about the grace and love of Jesus Christ. And I gave an opportunity for kids to accept Christ, and over 150 high school students said yes to Jesus. They gave their life to the Lord. They came in tears.

Â They were so thankful for what God was doing in their life. And the camp director came to me and he

was so excited. He said, man, that was incredible. That's one of the biggest decisions we've ever seen at camp. And he was so thrilled to see real life change.

Â Well, the next day, a bunch of the youth pastors came and complained to him, and said, we don't use the word sin at our church. We don't use the word repentance at our church. And so all these youth pastors asked the camp to ask me to take out any words of sin or repentance from my last message.

Â And so another camp director came and he told me what was happening. He said, hey, if you have sin or repentance in your message, could you take that out or do a different message? And I said no. And he said, well, then can you go home early? And I said, I'm ready to see my kids, bye.

Â And I got on the plane. And as I was flying home, I was just reminded of that passage, "In the last days, men will hoard up for themselves teachers because of the itching of their ears." See, people who believe a counterfeit gospel, the real gospel is offensive to them.

Â Carnal believers are easily deceived. This explains why the prosperity gospel has flourished so much in our culture today. A couple of years ago, my wife and I were watching TV and there was a televangelist who was getting in some trouble on TV because he had been asking for \$54 million to get himself a new jet. And he was on TV saying, I need \$54 million to get a new jet. God told me I need this new jet because he doesn't want me flying in a big metal tube with a bunch of other demons, referring to humans.

Â When a pastor's referring to the people he's supposed to be witnessing to as demons, there's a problem. And we're watching this. My wife says, again, it's obvious this guy's a kook. It's obvious he's crazy. You're like, what is this guy talking about? This is insane.

Â And yet my wife said, why is it that people buy into it? Why is it that people give him money? I mean, you would think that any rational Christian would hear what this guy is saying and saying that is ridiculous, and that is not true. And I said, honey, the difference is you know the Bible. The difference is you read the Bible.

Â You know the real thing. And so when you see something fake, you can spot the difference and say, that is not true. But carnal believers, the tares, they just believe anything that they hear. If a pastor says it and says, God told me, or the Bible says, they accept it as true.

Â And this answers the question as to why so many bad churches are growing. Let me tell you something. In our culture, we have a misrepresentation. Growth does not mean health. Growth does not mean blessing. It's not because God is blessing them. It's because they found what appeals to carnal believers.

Â There are many churches today that will have awesome programs, great music, entertaining videos, a really strong political message that riles you up, but they will never teach the Bible. They might hint to it. They might reference it occasionally to prove one of their points. But they aren't teaching the full counsel of God's word. Ephesians 4:14 says "That we henceforth be no longer children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, but grow into the full measure and completeness found in Christ."

Â Another sign of carnal believers is that they're prone to division and envy. Again, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, "There is strife and envying, divisions among you, showing your carnality." If Satan can get us fighting instead of evangelizing, he's won. And so he'll sow the tares in our midst so that they will constantly be starting arguments and starting these divisive conversations, so that we're not doing our job.

Â And we get so focused on arguing with each other that we stop evangelizing, and seeing new people get saved, new wheat take root, and new health and growth happen. They blame others. They're fault finders, because they're personally frustrated. They want other people on their side. And so they will mold and manipulate scripture to fit their needs and their arguments.

Â In the last days we're even told that there will be a counterfeit Christ that Satan will bring. And all through the Bible, we see this pattern of infiltration and the compromise that follows. When the children of Israel leave Egypt, they're joined by the mixed multitude, a group of spiritual freeloaders. And it's actually the mixed multitude that begin the complaining in the desert that riles the rest of God's people up into thinking that they've been abandoned and lusting after the things that they left behind.

Â It's the mixed multitude that starts that, and then causes the real ones to question. Ananias and Sapphira appear to not only be believers, but super spiritual ones. And yet Peter said, "Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit."

Â And this sin still exists in the church today. It's when people come to church and go through all the motions, look really spiritual, but they don't mean it in their heart. Jesus did a similar thing in his betrayal of Jesus. It says that when Judas came to Jesus to identify him, he smothered him in kisses, making his act of betrayal all the more despicable.

Â Cicero said, "Of all villainy, there is none more base than that of the hypocrite, who at the moment he is most false takes care to appear most virtuous." Simon the sorcerer is another example in the New Testament. He dazzled people with his witchcraft and his magic. And when Philip came to town, Simon appeared to have a conversion. It says Simon himself believed, and was baptized. But Simon still wanted the attention of people.

Â And when he saw the power of the Holy Spirit come upon people, he tried to pay Peter to get that same power. And Peter said, "May your money perish with you because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money." This just shows us all these stories, that contact with holy things, if it does not convert, it will harden the heart.

Â The light of Jesus Christ, if it doesn't convert the listener, it will plunge them into deeper darkness. Again, we talked about last week this premise that we are so privileged to live in a country that we get access to the Word of God, to hear the Word of God, to hear biblical truth, and to hear teaching. But with that privilege comes responsibility.

Â Because if we spend our days reading the Word, going to church, but it doesn't actually change our hearts, it will harden our hearts. Yes, there are tares among the wheat. The mixed multitude are among us. The Ananiases and Sapphiras, the Judases and the Simons, the satanic plants that are put there to undermine the work of God.

Â And we can't spot the difference in others. But you know what? We can spot it in ourselves. Perhaps you're living in this carnal dilemma right now. To defeat sin's control in our lives, we need to move up from carnal self-indulgent living to the spirit empowered life, where all these sinful things simply can't survive.

Â If you try to battle your carnality and sin by yourself, you're going to lose. The only way you can defeat the carnality in your life is to focus not on sin, but focus on Jesus Christ, the sin forgiver. Focus on what we've been redeemed to. Focus on getting back up after we've fallen. Rise up, and the things that are bringing you down will naturally fall off.

Â And this leads directly into our last point, and that is that the best way to spot the fake is to be real. Look at verse 29 to 30. "But he said, no, lest while you gather up the tares, you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. And at the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, 'first gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Â Jesus makes it clear that the separation of the wheat and the tares isn't going to happen until the end. That until the end, until the judgment day, they're not going to be separated. Until then, we exist side by side, breathing the same air, enjoying the same sunshine and rain, eating the same food, attending the

same schools, working the same jobs in the same offices, living in the same neighborhoods. And yes, attending the same churches.

Â We exist side by side. This has always and will always be the case. But we need to understand, our objective isn't to weed them out. Our job isn't to weed them out and find out who is real and who is fake. Our job, first and foremost, is to make sure that we are the real thing.

Â The best way to spot a fake is to simply be real. Just be wheat. Just grow. Just be planted where God has you, and grow in your knowledge and understanding of God's word, realizing yes, there is coming a day when the master is going to send out his reapers, and He's going to distinguish the real from the fake. And those who are real will be gathered together in the barn, and we're going to have the biggest barn party you've ever seen.

Â But until that day, let's just be wheat. Let's just grow, and as we grow, let us have fruit that falls from our limbs and makes more wheat. Our job isn't to get rid of the tares. Our job is to make more wheat. If Jesus didn't tell us that we wouldn't be able to spot the wheat from the tares, how would you determine who's fake and who's real?

Â If your theology matches mine. If you go to the church that I go to. If you give this amount of money to these organizations. If you worship in this way. If you vote for these politicians. We've gotten so caught up in the past six years of our world and what we're against. It seems like we're constantly talking about the tares.

Â In the news, we're being told who and what to hate. Cancel culture has affected some of us so much than how we've become guilty of the same thing. We've become more known for what we're against than what we're for. And I'm not saying that what's happening in our world isn't important. It is important, and we should be involved. We are a preserving agent, the Bible tells us, in this world.

Â What I'm saying, and what I'm asking is has your attention to what is momentarily important diminished your passion for what is monumentally important? Are we more inclined to protest than we are to pray? Are we more interested in who's in the White House than who's in God's house? Are we more interested in boycotts than the salvation of our family and friends?

Â Because we can end up spending all of our time trying to spot the tares and talking about the tares that we forget about the wheat. Let's focus on the wheat. Have we left our first love? Some of us spend so much time looking at others that we forget to ever look at ourselves.

Â Look at how intolerant David was towards the person that Nathan spoke of in his story. David wanted to kill him. He was so angry. Why was he so angry? Because he had a huge log in as eye. That's why he was angry. He had a log in as eye.

Â Why was he so harsh in dealing so brutally with the sin that he heard about? Because you're always harshest with the sin that's lurking in your own heart. David prayed a prayer that every single Christian needs to pray every single day. Create in me a clean heart, oh God. Then will I teach transgressors your ways.

Â Christian, can we pray that prayer every day we wake up? Lord, I know there's a lot going on in this world. I know I'm going to watch the news and open Instagram and be triggered instantly. I know there's just a lot of chaos, there's a lot of tares. But Lord, today create in me a clean heart.

Â Sadly, there are those who thrive on condemning others. Their attitude is the opposite of what a true believer should manifest, that love believes the best of every person. This person rarely knows the facts. And so without getting all the facts, they draw conclusions and they pass judgment.

Â Proverbs 18:13 says, "He who gives an answer before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him." This is also a sign of carnality. And the best way to spot a fake is to be real, and to be real we must first confess our own sin. Often, the sin of self-righteousness and a condemning spirit.

Â All too often because of our actions, Christians are perceived in this world as being negative. If we don't approve of a certain movie, we boycott it. If we don't like a certain store, we picket it. If we don't agree with what's happening in society, we organize a march.

Â We spend all of our time writing blogs, recording videos, making signs and writing posts about what we're against. But meanwhile, in the church pastors are falling out of ministry every day because of a myriad of moral sins. The divorce rate in the church is nearly identical to the divorce rate in the world.

Â We decry sexual perversion, and yet Barna states there's virtually no difference in the monthly porn use of non-Christians, 65%, versus Christian, 64%. We are preaching holiness. We are shouting to the world, be holy. But are we holy?

Â Are we making ourselves holy? Instead of looking at others, let's start looking at ourselves. And the more that we look at ourselves and focus on our personal holiness, the more we'll begin to love others, and God will give us a burden for the lost.

Â This is what revival looks like. If we can get this, seeing people excited and passionate about the simple Gospel, not fighting and bickering about specific doctrines, seeing Christians more focused on how to make others feel comfortable, instead of how to make themselves feel more comfortable, focusing on our own character, our own motives and our own application of God's word instead of others.

Â Because the minute we become so comfortable in our pews that we forget about people, the church will perish. We are speaking and filling our social media pages with what we're against, when we should be speaking and filling our social media pages with the Gospel of Christ.

Â What if we stopped retweeting news articles, and instead we tweeted out the simple Gospel of Jesus every day, and told the world, Jesus loves you. He died for your sins. And if you accept His sacrifice, you can live in freedom from your sin with the knowledge that you're going to heaven. What if that was what the church was messaging to the world?

Â The best way to fight against the tares is to make more wheat, sow more seeds. Preaching the gospel and winning others to Him by grace and love is the answer. Do you spend more time arguing doctrine or politics with people on social media than sharing your faith with others?

Â Luke 10:2 says, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers." God is looking for and even commanding you and I to be laborers who are willing to plant and water spiritual seeds in the lives of those who don't yet know Jesus.

Â And it's easy for us to cop out from our calling and say, well, I'll just live it, and I'll leave the preaching to others. Imagine if I try that with my wife and said, you know what? I'm not going to say I love you anymore. I'm just going to live it. I hope that's enough. That wouldn't last very long. We need to verbalize and vocalize the true word of God, the good news that changed you. Your job is to proclaim it, to share it, to communicate it.

Â Christianity Today conducted a poll as to why more believers don't share their faith, and this is what they found. 89% of Christians agree that faith in Christ is the only way to salvation. 87% say that every Christian is responsible for evangelism, and yet only 55% of all Christians claimed to have shared their faith in Christ with a non-Christian during the past 12 months.

Â That means half of Christians haven't talked about Jesus to another person in a year. That should scare

us. Even more scary, 95% of Christians have never led another person to Jesus. The laborers are few.

Â Imagine if we started sharing the love of Jesus and making it our personal mission to lead others to faith in him. Imagine how our church and our city and our state and our country would change. If we can make real believers, that's going to change politics. If we can make real believers, that's going to change the laws that are getting passed.

Â If we can make real believers, that's going to change our communities and bring dads back into the house. If we can change the world with the love of Jesus, that will bring us the answer we're all looking for. We've been looking in the wrong place. The answer is with Jesus.

Â And you say, well, I just want to be sensitive. People don't want to hear it. So I don't want to say it. Look, people either in this life or the next must be confronted with the fact that they are sinners separated from a holy God, and there is salvation in no other name than the name of Jesus Christ. At some point in this life or the next, they will be confronted with that truth. And if you don't do it now, who will?

Â You say, well it's just so offensive. It's going to be more offensive when they stand before Jesus on judgment day and hear, depart from me, I never knew you, than it will be to sit with you across a coffee table and hear, Jesus loves you. He has a wonderful plan for your life. He died for your sins, and if you accept him, He can forgive you and give you eternal life. That is not offensive. That is good news to those who receive it.

Â And this is what Connect Groups fight against. It takes what we hear and it gives us an opportunity to apply it, and to change us. It turns us from just spectators, and it turns us back into participators. We're no longer just consuming, we're communing. We're no longer just customers, we're disciples. Because the longer we immerse ourselves in religion, the more prone we are to forget what makes it work in the first place.

Â We become so caught up in events and services and theology and ministry that we forget the why. And I've seen this-- my heart's been broken coming out of COVID. I think this has happened so much for two years. We've sat on our couches consuming, just consuming, watching more content, swapping back and forth to this preacher, that preacher.

Â I don't like what he said. I'll listen to this guy instead. Just consuming, consuming, consuming. We've been filling up. We've been sitting, but we haven't been doing anything. We've been getting filled, but we're not pouring. Church, it's time to start pouring. It's time to make more wheat. It's time to sow more seeds.

Â It's time to start looking at our lives and saying to God, Lord, make me holy as you are holy. It's time for us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, wholly and accept, instead of sacrificing others on the altar of our opinions.

Â It's time for us to grow in the knowledge and the truth of Jesus Christ, so that we can be presented acceptable to the Lord. And as we grow, it's time that we start telling people and evangelizing the truth of God's work. And you say, well, I'll just bring people to church. They can hear it there. You're the church.

Â The church's job is to train you up in every good work, and your job is to evangelize and watch people's lives change. We build up so that you can go out. And don't just hear this message and say, well, that was a really good message. That was really convicting. No. This week, every single person in this room, I challenge you, share the love of Jesus with at least one person.

Â Tell one person about Jesus this week. Don't be one of the statistics. Don't be one of the 55% of the 95%. This week, tell someone about Jesus. How many people are you going to see this week, 100? Tell one of them that Jesus loves them and died for their sins. And watch as God begins to change this place and

change our city, as we take this call personally.

Â I want to close with a story. The expression face the music is said to have originated in Japan. A person of great influence and wealth demanded that he be given a place on the orchestra because he wanted to perform before the emperor. But the problem was that he wasn't a musician. He couldn't play an instrument. So you see the problem. Someone wanted to join the orchestra who doesn't know how to play music.

Â He was given a flute. The conductor agreed to let him sit on the second row of the orchestra, even though he couldn't read or play. And when the concert would begin, he'd raise his instrument. He'd pucker his lips, and he'd sit there for an hour and move his fingers. But no notes were coming out.

Â He went through all the motions of playing, but he never made a sound. This deception continued for two years, until one day a new conductor took over and told the orchestra that he wanted to audition each player personally. Well, one by one these musicians performed in his presence, until it was the flutist's turn.

Â And you can imagine, he was frantic with worry. He pretended to be sick. He came with all these reasons why he couldn't do it. But his lies had caught up with him. The pretender had to ultimately admit he was fake. He couldn't face the music.

Â One day, Christian, we will stand before God himself. It'll be time to play the music. And although we might have gone through all of our lives doing a good job fooling others in the church, you will have to face the music. How will you play? I challenge you, let us play beautiful music for the Lord. Let us spend our lives living our lives as a sweet smelling aroma to our Savior in heaven.

Â Let us focus on our own personal holiness. Let us let God change our lives from the inside out, and as He changes our lives, let's use His word to change others' lives. And then let's all sit back in amazement as He changes this world around us. Amen?

Â Thank you so much for joining us for this message from Calvary Church. We would love to know how this message impacted you. Share your story with us. Email mystory@calvarynm.church. And if you'd like to support this Bible teaching ministry with a financial gift, visit calvarynm.church/give.

Â [MUSIC PLAYING]Â