

A Follow Up Bible Study

Building on the Messages of the Lessons from the 9th Sunday after Pentecost

Warm Up

Share - A friend asks you, "Do you believe there is a hell? If so, what is it like?" What do you tell them?

Many people find it hard to *believe* that a loving God would send anyone to hell. Treating it as a sincere question, how would you answer them?

1. Sermon for August 2, 2020

Text: **Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

Theme: Rejoice, discovering why Jesus said, "No, not yet!"

Share your questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon.

Share your questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon **text**.

2. Jesus' first parable was the *Sower and the Seed*. Right away Jesus' disciples came to him asking, "*Why do you speak to them in parables?*" After answering that question Jesus taught the parable of the *Weeds among the Wheat*. Even after Jesus decoded the first parable, the disciples needed help with this one. They waited for privacy to ask Jesus to explain it. The explanations of the two parables provide the instruction we need to understand Jesus' parables.

❖ Compare what the *seeds* represent in these two parables.

❖ Compare the *sowers*. Who do they represent in these two parables.

❖ Identify: *the field* - *harvest* - *reapers* - *fiery furnace* - *barn* - *servants*

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- ❖ A question about an American word: *What is a **barn**? What is a **barn** used for?*

- 3. Israel struggled with a reality that still bothers people today. Paul answers it: *not all who are descended from Israel are really Israel, ...* Romans 9:6
 - ❖ Share examples of people today who still miss Paul's point.

 - ❖ Jesus explained that he had started teaching in parables because some in the crowd, like in Isaiah's day, were *hearers of the word*, but were not believers, i.e. children of God. **Explain how** this parable addresses that situation and **how** believers are to respond to that situation.

- 4. What are the dangers of a believer living in a community with unbelieving neighbors?
 - ❖ What happens when a community of believers starts using the *sword* to deal with beliefs that are contrary to God's Word?

 - ❖ List blessings God provides his people by having them live in communities with unbelievers.

- 5. The *end of the world* (Judgment Day) is pure good news - pure mercy - to those who are in Christ. List what we're looking forward to, first noting things Jesus revealed in our text.

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First Lesson: Joel 3:12-16

6. The book of Joel provides no details that allow us to know when Joel served as Yahweh's prophet. If *the Valley of Jehoshaphat* is a reference to the place where Yahweh destroyed the Moabite, Ammorite, and Mt. Seir horde in the presence of Judah and King Jehoshaphat, without his people lifting a finger, then Joel ministered sometime after 848 BC. But since *Jehoshaphat* means *Yahweh judges* this could be a figurative name, not a literal location.

Either way, how do we know this text depicts Judgment Day at the end of this world?

7. No doubt this text was chosen to match the *harvest* reference in the Gospel Lesson. What does the harvest reference in v. 13 tell us about the Last Day and God's timing?

8. What does the name *Valley of Decision* communicate to you?

9. What is the only hope - the sure hope - for God's people on Judgment Day according to v. 16?

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Second Lesson: Romans 8:26-27

10. Note the context.

²³ And not only creation, but also we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we eagerly await our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

²⁶ In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we should pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that are not expressed in words.

❖ What common threads do you spot in these 2 verses?

❖ Verse 26 starts with *In the same way*... What's the similarity?

11. What weakness in the child of God does Paul reference here? How does God compensate?

12. List how this intercession of the Spirit helps us in our weak state of this life.