

Wheat and Tares

by Harold Vaughan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of examining ourselves to see if we are truly saved and not just pretending to be a Christian, highlighting the difference between genuine and counterfeit Christianity.

Duration: 44:49

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 13:24, John 3:16, Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 John 2:3-4

Topics: "Wheat And Tares"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher presents a courtroom scenario where a person is on trial and facing condemnation. The judge is about to render a verdict when suddenly, a man in a white robe with nail scars in his hands enters the courtroom. This man, representing Jesus Christ, takes the stand and testifies on behalf of the defendant. He declares that he has taken the guilt and paid the penalty for the defendant's sins, offering his own blood as evidence. The judge then declares that the claims of sin, the world, and the devil against the defendant are rendered invalid by the blood of Jesus Christ. The sermon emphasizes the power of Jesus' sacrifice and the redemption available to all who believe in him.

Transcript

Before my son's fourth birthday, he shocked my wife one day when he said these words. He said, Mom, Jesus made me free. And she was stunned.

The following day in the office, he came again with that line when he said, Mom, Jesus made me free. And she thought, well, maybe he got this off the radio or on gospel tape. The following evening at dinner table, he came again with that line when he said, Mom, Jesus made me free, and pretty soon, He's going to make me four.

So he wasn't the spiritual giant we had hoped at that tender age. You know, before you run the race, you better be certain you're placed on the right track. Before you climb a ladder, you better make certain it's leaning against the right wall.

Before you take a test, you have to be prepared. And before you meet God, you must be ready. I want you to turn in your Bible in Matthew chapter 13 to the parable of the wheat and the tares.

The gospel of Matthew chapter 13, beginning there in verse 24. Matthew chapter 13, verse 24. And if we could stand out of reverence for the reading of the Word of God, please.

Matthew chapter 13, beginning in verse 24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which 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 blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest. And in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them. But gather the wheat into my barn.

Just a moment of prayer together, please. Our Heavenly Father, our prayer today is that some that came to this service in the condition of a tare might leave wheat by the grace of God. May souls be saved and may you be honored, we pray.

For Christ's sake, Amen. You may be seated. Now in verse 25 we read the words that the tares are among the wheat.

In other words, the tares are intermingled among the wheat. They tell us that we have 160 million church members in America. 160 million.

And I want to tell you, if a portion of them were truly converted, our country would be in better shape than it is. Vance Abner said, Some church members are starched and ironed, but they've never been washed. I want to tell you there's never been a farmer that went out and sowed weeds in his field intentionally.

He goes out and sows the good seed, and then the weeds come up all on their own. Now what we have here in this text are the wheat and the tares. And what we have here in this service this morning, no doubt, are the wheat and the tares.

You see, a tare is a lost, hellbound, and maybe even perhaps church member who might at first appear outwardly to be saved. I want to tell you that a tare can act like a Christian. A tare can pray like a Christian.

And a tare can even give like a Christian. You say, Well, we have all kinds of tares here in this town and in this church. They're like Easter bunnies.

They only hop in once a year, and we never see them again. Can I say something to you? That a tare is not the worst person in the church. A tare is not the worst person in society.

I want to tell you that a tare might be some of the best people that you know. You see, a tare can come to every service. A tare can tithe his income.

A tare can sing in the choir. A tare can teach Sunday school. A tare can serve as a deacon.

A tare can even preach in the pulpit. You say, Do you believe there are lost preachers in the pulpits of America? Well, of course. Haven't you watched religious television lately? I want to tell you, friend, there's always been more false prophets and false preachers than there have been true preachers.

You see, the truth of the matter is that there are tares among the wheat, and in the initial stages, they can look just like the wheat. Now, Jesus talked about the wheat and the tares. One is real, and one is fake.

One is authentic, and one is counterfeit. One is genuine, and one is false. Both are represented in the text.

Both are represented in the service here today. The wheat and the tare. The true and the false.

The heavenbound and the hellbound. Now, this might be a strange service for some of you, because I am not going to ask you today to pray for anyone else to be saved. But I am going to ask you to do what it says in 2 Corinthians 13, what it says, examine yourself and see if you be found in the faith.

You know, when Paul wrote that letter to the Corinthians, he was not writing to people in the beer joint. That's an appropriate terminology for Milwaukee, amen? And the state of Wisconsin. You know, they call it the dairy land of America.

They all have called it the beer joint of America. The tavern of America. Down south we have churches on every corner.

Up here you have taverns on every corner. I don't know how I got off on that. But anyhow, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he was not writing to people in the honky-tonk.

When he wrote those words, he was writing them to people who had been baptized and publicly identified with a local Bible-believing Bible church. And he said, I'm sick, I'm on medication, so you'll have to just overlook those things. And he wrote it to people who had identified publicly with Jesus Christ.

But he said those words, examine yourself and see if you be found in the faith. And there's a lot of people that say, well, I'm not sure what I said or what I prayed or what I did, but my mother and my father were there and they both said I got saved. Can I tell you something? Your mother and your father have no conception of what really transpired in your heart.

How many people have said, well, I went forward in the church and the pastor told me I was saved. I want to tell you it's not what the pastor thinks. It's not what your parents think.

It's not what the evangelist thinks. It's what you know in your heart and you've got to know in your heart that you have passed from death unto life. I want to tell you, you need more than the memory of a prayer to base your eternal salvation upon.

You need more than the memory of a prayer. How many people say, well, I remember when I got baptized or I got baptized as an infant or I remember when I went forward or I remember when I joined the church. Outward response is not proof positive of genuine salvation.

Now the tare represents an unsaved person while the wheat represents the genuine Christian. And in this passage of Scripture, Jesus gives us three essential words. First of all, He tells us how the tares are sown.

Then He tells us how the tares are seen. And then He tells us how the tares will be separated. Notice first, if you will, how the wheat and the tares are sown.

The text says that the wheat and the tares are planted together. In verse 24, there the good man sowed his seed. And there, verse 25, the enemy came along and sowed tares among the wheat.

You know a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. A parable is a physical story with a spiritual application. You say, well, what does the word plant have to do with spiritual things? Well, the word plant is the counterpart for the word experience.

You see, both the wheat and the tares went into the ground. Both the wheat and the tares were planted. Both the wheat and the tares had the same identical experience of being sown.

The farmer sowed the good seed and the tares were sown by the devil. Especially down south, we hear testimonies along this line quite frequently. Somebody step into the pulpit and they will say something like this.

Well, you know, I went to this revival meeting. And there the preacher that night was preaching on hell. And I got terrified.

And I responded. And I went down front and I knelt. And that night when I went outside, I want to tell you, the grass was greener than it's ever been.

The sky was bluer than it's ever been. And that night the stars were brighter than they've ever been. Now, you know the only problem with that kind of testimony is that they are not necessarily describing a conversion experience.

In those sorts of testimonies, not one word is said about Jesus Christ. Not one word is said about trusting in the shed blood of Christ for the covering and salvation from sin. You see, there's no doubt about the fact that they had an experience.

But I'm here to tell you, you can have an experience with emotion. You can have an experience with immorality. You can have an experience with guilt.

You can have an experience with rock and roll music. Friend, it's not the experience itself that validates anything. My friend, I want to tell you, the wheat and the tares were both planted.

They both had the same identical experience of being sown. You know, statistics tell us that the vast majority of people who respond, especially in mass evangelistic crusades, never identify with the local church and never give any indication that they truly passed from death unto life. May I say to you here this morning that you can come forward and still be as hellbound as an atheist? Friend, you can come forward and never come to Calvary.

You can go under the water without going under the blood. You can sign a decision card without having your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. You can be baptized and not be born again.

Jesus did not say, if any man come forward, I'll in no wise cast him out. He said, if any man come to Me, I will in no wise cast him out. And the question today is, are you wheat or are you a tare? I was preaching in North Carolina many, many moons ago.

That Sunday morning we had three individuals respond for salvation. They came down the aisle, took the pastor's hand, and the pastor instructed them to have a seat on the front row. So they sat on the front row.

When the invitation was concluded, the pastor made his way back to the back door and shook over 300 hands. No attempt on his part to point those three souls to Christ. No attempt to tell them that they needed to place their faith in the shed blood of the Son of God.

But you see, these people came forward and these people had a religious experience. I want to tell you, it's possible to have religious experiences and yet not be born again. You see, it's possible to belong to a ball club wear the uniform, come to every practice, never miss a game, but if you miss first base, you're still out.

And my dear people, it's possible to be a Sunday school teacher, it's possible that your husband is the head of the deacons, and still yet be a tare. The only people that get upset when church members get saved are other lost church members. And the fact of the matter is, it doesn't really make any difference what anybody else thinks.

You've got to know in your heart that you have passed from death to life. The wheat and the tares are planted together. But notice number two, the wheat and the tares, they progress together.

They progress together. Now, in verse 26, the tares are first spotted by the field hands. And these servants come to their master, and they report that there are tares among the wheat, and they say, Sir, didn't you plant wheat in the field? He said, Well, of course.

And they said, Well, where in the world did all these tares come from? And he said, An enemy hath done this. Do you realize that this was such a common problem in Bible times, that people would sabotage a fellow neighbor if they wanted to destroy him financially? They would go out at night, and they would sow tares, they would sow weeds among the wheat. And by the way, a tare is a poisonous ryegrass, which in the early stages looks identical to the wheat.

Even an experienced farmer could not distinguish between a wheat and the tare in the early stages. It was not only a common problem, it was such a common practice that the Romans devised a law against planting tares among the wheat. You say, Well, do tares grow? Well, yes, because in verse 30 it says the wheat and the tares grow together.

You say, Well, do tares grow spiritually? Apparently, but not actually. Apparently, but not actually. I say in the early stages, you cannot distinguish between the wheat and the tares, but when it comes time toward harvest, it becomes very evident that there are tares among the wheat.

And I want to tell you, there's always been tares among the wheat. Jesus Christ had to contend with Judas Iscariot. And at the last table, Jesus said to His disciples, One of you here will betray Me.

And you know, the disciples didn't all in one accord say, Aha! We knew it was that beady-eyed Judas over there. They didn't have a clue. They didn't think it was Judas.

They thought it was them. They were more suspicious of their own hearts than they were of Judas Iscariot. I want to tell you, there's always been tares among the wheat.

The early church had to contend with the atrophies. All the religious leaders of Jesus' day rejected their Messiah. The church began with the apostles, and now it's ending with the apostates.

There's always been tares among the wheat. You say, Well, do tares grow? Well, no, but they look like they're growing. Let me ask you a question.

Can a tare read his Bible? Yes or no. Can a tare give his money to the church or to charitable causes? Is it possible that a tare can memorize Scripture? Can he attend Sunday school? Can he grow in faithfulness

to church, but all the while not growing in Christ? We were in Deland, Florida. We were in a meeting.

I was sitting with the pastor on that occasion. And all of a sudden, early that morning, a knock came at the parsonage door. And lo and behold, here was a deacon.

He was a man who had progressed to the level of being a servant in that local church, had been ordained by that local church. But he said these words. He said, You know, I've been up this night, and I've been so convicted.

And he had a terrible, distraught look upon his countenance. And he said, I don't believe I've ever been saved. I was in Yanceville, North Carolina, preaching on one occasion.

And early, early, early, early one morning, a knock came on the pastor's door. They had to drag me out of bed. They said, Harold, there's a deacon here and he wants to get saved.

Here was a fellow. He had been up all night in distress of mind and soul, under conviction of sin, and yet he, while being a deacon, was a tare. I say a tare may not be the worst person, may not be the worst church member, but actually may be some of the most upstanding people in the church and in society.

You know, artificial flowers and shrubs, some of them look so real, you can't even tell the difference. Now, obviously, you can tell the difference between these right here and the real thing, amen? But there are some that you cannot tell the difference. I was in Sam's Club with my wife some time ago, and I was standing two feet away from an artificial shrub, one of these trees, and I even had my reading glasses on, and I said to my wife, I said, is it real or is it counterfeit? I couldn't even tell.

That thing looked so realistic. You know, when it comes to counterfeiting money, I want to tell you the best counterfeit looks the most like the original. I remember the first New 20 I got.

You know, that New 20 they got out that they wouldn't be able to duplicate, and they already had it duplicated before the government released it. But, you know, when you go into the store and you hand a guy a \$100 bill or a \$50 bill, they pull out that yellow marker, and they're going to test it to see if it's the real thing or not, and they're looking in the light. When that lady handed me that 20, I felt like asking her to borrow that yellow marker to see if she was handing me a counterfeit on that occasion right there.

It didn't look like the real thing. But I want to tell you the best counterfeit looks the most like the original. You know, in the movies, when they want to portray an all-American neighborhood, what they do is they construct this street like Mayberry RFD, and it looks like an all-American neighborhood, but if you go behind the set, you'll find it's nothing but a bunch of 2x4s and plywood.

The movie industry calls it a facade because it gives the outward appearance, but there's nothing behind it. You know what we do with artificial church members? I'll tell you what we do. We let them teach Sunday school.

Put them in the choir. Let them work with young people. A lot of places, they ordain them.

Why? Because the best counterfeit looks the most like the original. I was speaking in a meeting one time, and the pastor's wife, she was a friend of ours, she came and took my hand at the conclusion of the meeting, and she said, Harold, judging by what's been coming out of my mouth, there's no way in the world I could really be saved. That was her indictment upon her own heart.

I want to tell you there's only one thing worse than being on the road to eternal destruction, and that's being on the road to eternal damnation while believing all the while you're on the road that leads to heaven. One heartbeat from hell, but convinced you're prepared to meet God. I was in Alabama speaking one time.

We had the Pensacola College Christian Choir come in. God had worked in the church that week in an incredible way, and we were having these red-hot, up-to-date, 24-hour testimonies of what God had done in the people's lives in less than 24 hours. And people were getting up and getting these staggering testimonies.

Well, the choir had sung. They were sitting on the front row, and there as the people began to testify as to what God had done in their hearts, the piano player with the group got this distressed look upon her countenance. And the next thing I know, she's leaning her head over on her girlfriend, and she's weeping profusely.

And I thought to myself, this girl is going to be sick. I thought there was something drastically wrong. I could hardly tell what was the matter.

And then after a while, they both got up, the girl and the girlfriend, and went out of the building. An hour later, they marched right back down to the front of the church, and the piano player stood before the congregation and announced that she had been saved. She was a pastor's daughter.

She went to a Christian college. She was the piano player for the choir. But she was a tear.

You say, Harold, well, what kind of fruit do Christians bear? You know, there are some distinguishing features you can tell by the fruit what sort of tree it really is. And one of the fruits that a genuine Christian will bear is an attitude of humility. You know when wheat matures and the grains, the kernels of wheat get heavy, you know what happens? It causes the stalk to bend over.

Have you ever noticed that? Our pastor's wife back home, she went out, and would you believe, bought, bought stalks of wheat to decorate with. Bought them. She went out on another occasion and bought sticks to decorate with.

And I saw all of this, and I said to my boys, I said, fellas, we got a fortune on our property here. If we can find some suckers to buy this mess, we can make a lot of money because these people will buy anything. And it was absolutely amazing.

But you know something about these stalks of wheat? They get heavy, and it causes the stalk to bend over, and the heads of wheat will bend over when come harvest time. But you know, tares are much lighter than the wheat. And when it comes time of the harvest and all the wheat have their heads bowed over, you know the tares are sticking straight up.

And it becomes very obvious, very obvious that they're not wheat at all. You know, repentance is a great indicator of humility. Friend, the fact of the matter is we're all born in sin.

We're all born, alienated from the life that is in God. And when we bow our heads and admit that yes, we've broken the law of God and we have sinned, we bow our heads and we repent. A great indicator.

Humility is a great indicator of the new birth. Another fruit is awareness of sin. It's putting off the old and putting on of the new.

Now, I don't believe in sinless perfection, but I'll tell you, friend, when you get converted, you'll sin less than you did before you got saved. And awareness of sin. There'll also be an affection for the saints.

The Bible says these words, We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. We just had an occasion this past week in our church where one of the mothers of one of our church members was ill and his wife was in the room reading the Bible and praying with the Christian mother-in-law when one of the other children came in and heard her praying and reading the Bible and she got offended.

Got offended. She was a church member, but got offended that she was reading the Bible and praying with the mother-in-law. I want to tell you, friend, if praying and reading the Bible offends you, you might be a church member, but you're not a member of the kingdom of God.

You need to get born again, man. I want to tell you something, friend. There will be an awareness.

An awareness of sin. And there will be an affection for the saints. I want to tell you, you can tell what kind of heart you've got by the type of people you're attracted to.

What about this one? What about this one? A new desire to apply the Scriptures to the life. Hereby do we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him.

What about this one? An evidence of fruit of the new birth. The assurance of the Spirit that nobody can take away. The Bible says the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Both the wheat and the tares are planted together. Both the wheat and the tares, they progress together. But notice, if you would, that the wheat and the tares will be processed together.

There is a time of separation coming. There's coming a day when the Master Farmer, God Himself, will separate the tares from the wheat. Now, Jesus interpreted the parable in Matthew chapter 13, in verse 37.

And I just want you to notice this interpretation. Don't you wish the Lord had gone to the length to interpret every parable so we wouldn't have all these silly speculations that go around in commentaries in our day. But here He gave us the straight scoop in verse 37.

Notice what it says. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world.

The good seed are the children of the kingdom. But the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil.

The harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world.

The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. There shall be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father who hath

ears to hear, let Him hear.

You know, there's some people that believe that all doubt of salvation comes from the devil. But that can't be right. Because dear ones, if the devil will try to unsettle true Christians, is it not logical to assume that he would try to give counterfeit assurance to those who are false Christians? In Matthew 7, Jesus said, Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he which doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.

And He said, Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, did not we preach in Your name and do many mighty wonderful works? And Lord, didn't we even cast out devils in Your name? And Jesus said, Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. Friend, the fact of the matter is in Matthew chapter 7, these people had assurance, but it was counterfeit assurance. They were stunned.

They were shocked when Jesus Christ said to them, Depart from Me, I never knew you. They had assurance, but it didn't come from God. I want to tell you, the devil tries to convince some people they're saved, by their good works.

But friend, there's an internal world of difference between fruit and works. The devil tries to convince some people they're saved because they're in good churches. Listen, just because you go to a gospel-preaching church doesn't mean you've got the gospel in you.

Good singing, good preaching, good teaching, good doctrine, all of these are good, but they don't necessarily mean that a person is saved. Now the Bible says here very clearly that there's coming a day when the wheat and the tares will be processed together, and the tares will be separated from the wheat. Jesus said the field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom, the tares are the children of the devil, and the enemy that sowed them is the devil himself.

You know those servants said to their master, Do you want us to go out there and pluck up the tares out of the wheat? He said, No, no, no, don't do it now, because if you go out in the field and you try to root up those tares, you're not only going to root up the tares, you're going to root up the wheat along with them. You leave them alone, because there's going to come a time of separation, but the time of harvest is not yet. And friend, I want to tell you that at the end of the age, God will gather the tares together and bundle them and cast them into the fire, but the wheat will be gathered into His barn.

Now, in 2 Thessalonians 1, it says these words, that when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, it's going to be in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Hear me this morning. The separation is to be done by God.

The separation time is not now. The time of harvest is coming. But right now, God is awakening tares and converting them into wheat.

You say, well, I don't know if I'm wheat or a tare. I've got nothing but good news for you this morning, friend, because this is the age of grace when God is saving tares. The Bible says that God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Hear me. Tares are not Christians. Good people by human standards are not Christians unless they've experienced the new birth.

And tares are not saved. You know, if you're going to believe anything Jesus said, you're going to have to believe everything that Jesus said. And Jesus spoke more often about hell than He did about heaven in the gospel record.

You know, according to Jesus Christ, hell is a real place. Hell is not a set of sad circumstances. Hell is not a place of unpleasant situations.

Hell is not a state of mind. But rather, hell is a literal place of burning. If you're a tare, I want to tell you from the Bible and the authority of the Son of God what you can expect in hell if you're a tare.

You say, well, what can I expect? Well, if you're a tare, I'll tell you number one. You can expect, verse 42, weeping and gnashing of teeth. A horrible, horrible anguish.

What can you expect? Verse 42, a furnace of fire. I know we're living in a day when the... I don't even know what to call it. We're living in a day when the soft, gentle, fake ministers have taken the fire out of hell, the evil out of sin, the fear out of God, and the edge off eternity.

But I want to tell you, my friend, according to Jesus Christ, there's such a thing as a literal burning hell. A fireman was called to a... He was working second shift down in Fort Worth, Texas. My friend asked him one day, what's the worst thing you've ever seen in your career as a fireman? He said he was working the shift that night.

They got called to the interstate, and there a truck had turned over, a semi, a tanker had turned over. Diesel fuel was spilling out all over the ground, but the driver was trapped. So immediately they hooked up their hoses, and they began to douse the truck down, fearing that some spark would ignite those diesel fumes, and the whole thing would burst into fire.

The driver was trapped. They were pumping water as fast and furious as they could, when all of a sudden, a spark ignited those fumes, and the whole thing burst into flames. That fireman said that the most horrible scream he had ever heard in his entire life was by that man trapped behind a wheel in that truck.

He said there was absolutely nothing they could do, but they watched. He said he watched as that poor man reached out his arms as if to plead for help from the people standing there. He said he was close enough into those awful flames to where he could see the skin literally bubbling up on the arm, on the flesh of that man who was burning to death.

But there was nothing. There was nothing they could do. And he said he watched as the man literally burnt to death, and the skin literally burnt off the man's bones.

He said it was the most horrible thing he had ever seen in his entire life. And you know what it says there in Luke 16? That rich man, he said, I am tormented in this flame. You know, on 9-11, when those planes went into the Twin Towers instantaneously, hundreds of people were incinerated and annihilated.

But I want to say to you this morning, dear one, that hell is not annihilation. Hell is not the cessation of existence, because the Bible teaches that just like eternal life is forever, eternal damnation is forever. And I want to tell you, if you're a tare, what you can expect is eternity in the flames of torment.

There will be an eternal agony. The Scripture says, Christ said, where the worm dies not and the flame is not quenched. What can you expect? A wicked company.

Because it says in Revelation, the fearful and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. You know, the main question this morning is, are you wheat or are you a tare? Jesus said, what will it profit a man if he gained the whole world and loses his own soul? I want to tell you, all tares will lose their souls. If you're a tare and you die in that condition, you'll never have another chance to change.

That's why it says in verse 30 that God will gather the wheat into His barn. But the tares, they will bundle and cast into the fire. Friend, now is the time to change classifications.

Now is the time to repent and believe the Gospel. Behold, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation.

Listen to this invitation. God said, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they can be as wool.

Oh friend, you can fool some of the people all the time. They say you can fool all the people some of the time. You can even fool yourself.

But no one can fool God. And friend, when the tares are gathered to be burned and the wheat is gathered to be put in the barn, will you be wheat or will you be a tare? It was in Scotland when three brothers got into a boat one afternoon. And those inland lakes, though they're beautiful, are often swept with unexpected sudden storms, violent storms.

They got out in the middle of the lake, these three brothers in the boat, when all of a sudden one of these storms swept down upon the lake and immediately the boat was capsized. The middle brother got caught in the rigging and he drowned outright. But somehow the older and younger brother managed to climb out from under that boat and they saw a rock jutting up in the lake over a hundred yards away and they knew that was their only chance to be saved.

So with all of their might, they began to swim toward that rock. The older brother reached the rock first. He was absolutely exhausted, totally worn out, but he turned around and a few yards behind he saw his little brother and with what little strength he had, he urged his little brother to hold out and come a little farther.

But the younger brother was so exhausted, he was barely able to move his arms in those battling climbing waves. But he exhorted him to hold out a little farther. Well, the little brother came a little farther and he couldn't go any farther and he went down.

Some people on the bank saw the distressing scene. They got in a boat, they came to rescue the older brother on the rock and when they got there, they found him almost wild in his grief. And over and over he would repeat the story of what had happened.

How the storm had come so suddenly. How the boat had capsized. How middle brother had got caught in the rigging.

How he and younger brother had got out from under the boat and somehow managed to swim toward the rock and how he had made it and little brother had got there. And then every time he would wind up this story with this sobbing cry. He would say these words, Oh lads, I tell you, little brother was nearly saved.

He said, I tell you, little brother was nearly saved. He was nearly saved. And he'd go through that same thing.

He was in a state of shock over and over again. And every time he would conclude with that mournful cry, I tell you, little brother was nearly saved. Little brother was nearly saved.

My dear one, nearly saved is not nearly enough. To be nearly saved is to be entirely lost. Don't you see? It's not enough to believe in God.

It's not enough to believe the Bible. You've got to have a brand new birth experience. Are you wheat or are you a tare? I think it was the early 20th century when they had a magnificent ship, a passenger ship called the Royal Charter.

It had been around the world, touched at every important port. It had arrived the night before in Queenstown and a message was sent to Liverpool, the home port that it would be docking there in the morning. Well, there was a great celebration.

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool was there. The Lord Mayor of London was there. There were bands of musicians, friends and family, and relatives of passengers and staff.

They were there. But the word came through that night that somewhere between Queenstown and Liverpool, the Royal Charter had gone down and just about everybody on board had been lost. The pastor there in Liverpool, his name was William Taylor, his wife was married to the first mate on that ship and he had been lost that night.

He was informed as pastor that it was his duty to go and tell the wife that her husband would never be coming home. He said he almost felt like an executioner as he made his way to the cottage with that tragic news. He rang the doorbell and there the little girl opened the door, a bright sunny-faced little girl, and she said, Oh, Dr. Taylor, I thought it was Papa.

He's coming home today. He went into the house and there he found in the sitting room a breakfast table spread. The wife came out and said, Oh, Dr. Taylor, you'll have to excuse me for having the breakfast table set at this hour, but you know, my husband's coming home today.

Without saying a word, he took that woman's hands in his and looked at her and he said, My poor woman, I want to tell you that the Royal Charter went down last night and your husband can never come home again. He said she was silent for a moment and then she pulled her hands away from his and shrieked and said these words, Oh my, so near home and yet lost. So near home and yet lost.

Some of you sitting here this morning, you're so near to home, you're not violently opposed to God. You're not violently opposed to the authority of God. You're not antagonistic toward the things of God outwardly.

You're very near home, but friend, if you've never been converted, you're still in your sin. There's only a line between some of you and God this morning and it's the line of faith and God is calling you to step over that line and trust Christ as your Savior this morning. Are you wheat or are you a tare? I want you to use your sanctified imagination and I want you to think with me for just a moment about heaven's courtroom.

Heaven's courtroom. You know, there's so much news about the courts and so many television programs about the courts. Everybody's got a program about a court and a judge is very popular in these days, but I

want you to think about heaven's courtroom.

In an earthly courtroom, you've got a judge sitting behind a desk in a black robe. He's got a gavel in his hand and he makes the decisions. In an earthly courtroom, you've got a place for the defendant, the accused.

You have a place for the prosecution, the accuser, and you have a place for the witnesses and the lawyers and, of course, the judge. I want you to use your imagination and think about heaven's courtroom and I want you to picture yourself sitting in the defendant's seat in heaven's courtroom. And sitting in the prosecution's seat is the enemy of God and man, the devil himself.

And sitting on the throne is seated the judge, God the Father. The prosecution calls its first witness and he calls on sin and sin takes the stand and makes this statement, Your Honor, the defendant here was born in me. He's tried to shake me off his whole life.

But Your Honor, you know he's tried to hide from me, but I've always found him. He's tried to forget me, but I've always made him remember. And every New Year's he would make a resolution he'd given up on me, but before the day was over he'd be calling on me again.

Sin takes the witness stand to testify against you. The second witness takes the stand to testify against you and it's the world. And the world says these words, Your Honor, he's part of us.

We're with him all the time. He loves me. He feels at home in me.

And the world testifies against you. The third witness takes the stand. The devil himself takes the stand and says these words, Your Honor, this is my son.

He's my child. He's part of my family. I'm his father.

He belongs to me. Prosecution rests its case. The defense attorney stands up and says, Your Honor, I'd like to call my first witness.

I'd like to call on church membership. And the judge says, Sorry, that's inadmissible. He says, Well, Your Honor, I'd like to call on baptism.

The judge says, Sorry, that's inadmissible. Well, I'd like to call on my third witness, Good Works. And the judge says, Sorry, inadmissible.

So you have to take the stand for yourself. And maybe you'll say something on these lines. Well, you know, Your Honor, I've got a good mom and a good dad and they love the Lord and they went to church and the judge is going to say, Sorry, inadmissible.

And there you're saying, Well, Your Honor, I turned over a new leaf and I tried to do better. Sorry, inadmissible. And there you're sitting there and you say these words, weeping.

Well, Your Honor, isn't there anything I can submit? And the judge says, You have absolutely no defense. Well, the judge is about to render his verdict when all of a sudden two doors open in the back of the courtroom. And there walks in a man in a white robe with nail scars in his hands.

He walks all the way to the front of the courtroom and he tells the prosecution to be quiet. He said, It's my turn now. And then he walks over to the bench and bows down in reverence before God the Father.

And there this man in this white robe with nail prints in his hands comes over to the defendant's table and he sees you bound in shackles and chains. And he says to you with compassion in his voice, Get up, my child. Let me sit here a while.

And he begins to take the stand. He begins to testify. And he says something to this effect, Your Honor, this man was doomed.

He was damned. He may be desperate. He may be despondent.

He may be distressed. He may be depressed. But Your Honor, I've taken his guilt and I've satisfied the claims of the law.

I'd borne his sin and paid his penalty. And Your Honor, I'd like to enter my blood as evidence on behalf of this man. And about that time, the judge renders the verdict by saying these words, Sin, the world, and the devil all presented legitimate claims against this man, but the blood of Jesus Christ has rendered them all invalid.

And the judge throws down the gavel and shouts the words, Not guilty. My friend, I want to tell you the only difference between the wheat and the tare is that the wheat has transferred his trust to the person of Jesus Christ and he's been covered by the precious, purging, powerful, potent blood of Jesus Christ. My friend, the only difference between a wheat and the tare is that the tare is trusting in self or good works or religious experiences while the wheat is trusting one thing for his eternal salvation and that's the precious shed blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for the remission of sins.

My friend, if you're a tare here this morning, there's nothing for you to do except admit it and make your way to the cross and trust the shed blood of Christ to save your eternal soul from eternal damnation. I ask you this morning, are you wheat or are you a tare?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14194.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/harold-vaughan/wheat-and-tares/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net