

THE FINAL SORTING OUT

References:

Matthew 13:24-30

Notes For Servants:

- 1.
- 2.

Objectives:

General:

Specific:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Instructions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Bible Verse:

“Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”
(Luke 17:21)

Lesson:

See Attached Sheets.

The Final Sorting Out

We often ask ourselves, "How did evil come into the world? Why are there evil people? What is our position in relation to sinners? Should we resist them? Should we try to annihilate them?"

Christ answered these questions in a parable about the Kingdom of God. He said, "The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and, went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the householder came and said to him? "stir did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds ? "He said to them, "An enemy has done this". The servants said to him, "Then, do you want us to go and gather them?", but He said! "No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let them both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn". (Matthew 13:24-30).

HOW EVIL CAME INTO THE WORLD?

God did not create evil. He created man perfect, and put him in paradise. But Satan, who was jealous of man, tempted man to rebel against God. Sin ES separation from God and rebellion against Him. When man yielded to the temptation of Satan, evil entered this world. That is why in the Divine Liturgy the Church says that sin entered the world by the envy of Satan, when man yielded to his temptation.

In the parable, the enemy is Satan. The man who sowed good seed is our Lord who died for us and rose again. The world is His field, and the good plants are the children of the Kingdom who bear good fruit to the glory of God. As for the weeds, they are the children of the devil. They try to harm the children of the Kingdom.

The annihilation of evil would cause the destruction, not only of evil-doers, but of righteous people as well. Moreover, God, in His mercy, wants to give a chance to everyone to repent. He does not want to force people to be righteous. Those who choose to remain in rebellion against Him, will be judged and punished at the end.

Thus God has given us the freedom to choose our own destiny. We can choose to be wheat and enjoy eternal life, or we can choose to be weeds and suffer eternal damnation.

OUR ATTITUDE TO EVIL-DOERS

Evil grieves God's children just as it grieves God. "It is inevitable that temptation comes, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes!" (Matthew 18:7). Even within the Church itself there are both the evil and the righteous, the hypocrite and the sincere. Our duty is both to guard ourselves from evil, and to do our best to prevent it from spreading.

We should not, however, hate evil-doers and seek to destroy them, like the sons of Zebedee who wanted "... to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them" (Luke 9:34). The Son of Man came to save, not to destroy. He is very patient now, but when He comes again, the whole world will be judged. (Rev. 20: 12 13). Then everyone will have to give an account of himself. All those who have rejected Christ will be punished, and all their evil thoughts, teachings, and works will be burnt. On the other hand, all who have accepted Christ and lived in obedience to Him will be glorified with Him.

Let us pray, as David did, saying (Ps. 26: 8—9). "Oh Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwells. Sweep me not away with sinners.

WHAT IS HELL?

Hell is not the horrible revenge of an angry deity. It is the natural consequence of separation from God. There can be no real happiness away from God. There can be only suffering and misery. Those who reject the Lord will have no reason to complain on the Day of Judgement, since they have chosen their own destiny.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The Kingdom of Heaven is not only the future glory which awaits the righteous, it is also the kingdom in which we can live while we are still in this world. It is in the hearts of all who have experienced true repentance and who are living in obedience to Christ.

The Lord Jesus says, "Behold the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

St. Paul speaking of the righteous, says, "But our commonwealth is in Heaven, and from it we expect a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body". St. John, writing on the same subject, says, "Behold, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him" (1 John 3 :2).

Saint Macarius the elder say, "At the resurrection of the righteous, the glory of the Holy Spirit within them, will shine forth. At present, this glory is inward; but On that day it will also be outward and visible, for the bodies of the saints will shine with effulgence and light".

St. John Chrysostom says that the martyrs who died for Christ's sake will have a glorious resurrection and that they will live in everlasting peace and happiness.

Conclusion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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(Luke 17:21)