

Session Two · The Kingdom and Its Enemies

The Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) · The Dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50) · The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9)

WHAT WE FOUND

If the Kingdom has come, why is there still so much evil, and why does the Church contain hypocrites? Jesus does not dodge the question. His answer holds three truths in tension: the evil is real, a sorting is coming, and the waiting has a purpose.

The Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) warned against trying to uproot evil by our own hands. Jesus says the field is the world (13:38), and the Church, following Augustine, has long applied the warning to her own mixed membership: our uprooting tears out wheat along with weeds, and the sorting belongs to God at the harvest. The Dragnet refused to soften the seriousness of that final separation. And the Barren Fig Tree revealed the mercy inside the delay: the vinedresser digs, waits, and pleads for one more year. God's patience is real, and it is not without end.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) The Church on earth is a *corpus permixtum*, a mixed body of saints and sinners; the weed can still become wheat, and the Lord's forbearance is the very time of conversion.

St. John Chrysostom (347–407) "Let both grow together until the harvest" is the gift of time for repentance, not indifference; yet the furnace is Jesus' own language, and the preacher who softens it is unfaithful.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) The Church cannot identify with final certainty who is outside grace; in God, mercy and justice are perfectly one, and his patience with a still-living sinner is not a debt but a mercy, time graciously given to turn back (cf. ST I, q. 21, a. 4; I-II, q. 112, a. 5; II-II, q. 60, a. 4).

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Take the person you have privately sorted as a "weed" and pray for them by name every day this week. Pray as if grace can still reach them; do not assume their final state.
2. Examine your own fig tree: where has God been patient with you, waiting for fruit? Take that one area and respond to his patience this week, in confession, in prayer, or in a concrete change. Do not wait for a more convenient season.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Copy it out this week and carry it with you: **2 Peter 3:9**

WHAT STAYED WITH ME

One line, an image, or a question from tonight that you do not want to lose:

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read ahead: Matthew 13:44-46 (the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl) and Matthew 21:28-32 (the Two Sons).

Catechism: CCC 827, 1030, and the Catechism on the Last Judgment (1038-1041)