

Zach Moffatt
Kingston Springs UMC
5th Sunday After Pentecost
July 17, 2011

Who Is This Man?

Matthew 13: 24-30

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY
SPIRIT, AMEN

Growing up in this time period has been really interesting. I mean think about it: I don't remember a time when we have not been at war, it seems like every day some new type of technology comes out, I don't remember gas prices being below a dollar fifty, and it seems like every year people are trying to bash on the Christian tradition. We're not allowed to pray in schools any more, our FCA club can't have a teacher in the meetings with us, the coaches on the sports teams are not allowed to be in the team huddle when the team prays. Everywhere you turn you see some provocative sign advertising some new type of clothing, make-up, movie, or TV show. The shows on TV themselves are becoming less and less censored, violence is being shown everywhere, kids today think its normal to drink underage, and do drugs. It is a more difficult time to be a Christian because it seems like everywhere we turn there is something that distracts from what we should be doing. There is always something there to tempt us, call to us; something that triggers lust, anger, pride, jealousy, gluttony, selfishness, greed. There are weeds in our lives everywhere we turn and they can distract us from our goals, from what we are supposed to be doing as Christians, from showing our love to Christ and to His world.

But this day in age is not the only time when the Christian lifestyle has been under attack so-to-speak. I can remember my parents telling me how hard it was and all the temptations they had to deal with when they were growing up. I can remember my grandparents telling me all the temptations and the difficulties they had to face throughout their lives. The

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Christian lifestyle, the way we are called to live just doesn't seem to sit right with the secular realm of things. We are always going to deal with weeds in our lives, something that can distract us or make our lives a little more difficult.

Much like how the farmer in our story today had a weed in his life, or many weeds I should say. Matthew tells us a story of Jesus and the parable he told. Jesus told them the parable of the weeds. "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

Now, let's take a step back and look at this scripture from another angle. Someone once told me that the beauty of the Bible is that you can read the same story 100 times and that same story will speak to you 100 different ways. Jesus is telling us that living the life he wants us to live is not going to be a cake walk. He is telling us that there will be enemies, people who won't like us for the message we bring, for the lifestyle we live. He is telling us that we are going to have weeds in our lives that are going to try and distract us and pull us every which way in hopes that for just a second we will take our eyes off the one we love, off of Christ. Jesus tells us blatantly that we are going to live among these things, that they won't be forced to move, that we won't have some kind of force field that will protect us from temptation, sin, and persecution. Jesus is telling us that we are living among weeds, among things and people that will distract us Christians; things and people that will try to pull us away from our Father in Heaven; things and people that will try to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy our relationship with God.

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My friends however hope is not lost. I know this all may sound scary and down but we have hope. When I read this passage it took me to another scripture just a few chapters ahead. In Matthew 16: 13-16 Matthew tells us this, “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Phillippi he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’

“They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’”

‘But what about you?’ he asked, ‘Who do you say I am?’

“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’”

Yes we do live in a world today that is not all that kind to our way of life. We do live in a secular world that teaches to put you first instead of the well being of others. We do live in a world that teaches its okay to have sexual relations before marriage. We do live in a world that teaches its okay for teens to drink as long as they don’t drive. We do live in a world that teaches teens its okay to try drugs just as long as you’re experimenting. We do live in a world that says its okay if you gossip as long as the one you gossip about doesn’t hear it. We do live in that kind of world; a world with weeds but just as Peter answered the question Jesus asked we too need to answer that question. Who is Jesus in our lives?

In the movie Talladega Nights the Ballad of Rickey Bobby there is a scene where Rickey Bobby and his family and friends argue over the version of Jesus they like the best. Rickey starts out by praying, “Dear Lord baby Jesus,” and then thanks Jesus for all the blessings he’s had but he continues “to say the phrase, “Dear Lord baby Jesus.” His wife, Carley, interrupts Rickey and says, “You know, Sweetie, Jesus did grow up. You don’t always have to call him baby.”

Rickey Bobby replies, “I like the Christmas Jesus best, and I’m saying grace. When you say grace, you can say it to grown-up Jesus, or teenage Jesus, or bearded Jesus, or whoever you want.”

Rickey continues his prayer, “Dear tiny Jesus, in your golden fleece diapers, with your tiny balled-up fists,”

His father-in-law angrily interrupts, “He was a man. He had a beard!”

Rickey Bobby snaps back, “Listen, I’m saying grace, and I like the Christmas version best!”

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Ignoring the conflict between the two men, Rickey's best friend, Cal says, "I like to picture Jesus in a tuxedo T-shirt. It says like, I want to be formal but I'm here to party too."

One of Rickey's sons says, "I like to picture Jesus as a Ninja, fighting off the evil samurai."

Cal then adds, "I like to think of Jesus with giant eagle wings and singing lead vocals for Lynyrd Skynyrd with an angel band."

Rickey then returns to his prayer, saying, "Dear eight-pound, six-ounce, newborn infant Jesus, who doesn't even know a word yet-little infant, so cuddly but still omnipotent." He thanks Jesus again for all the success he's had with his racing career and concludes his prayer by saying, "Thank you for all your power and grace, dear Baby God. Amen."

Even though this movie is a comedy about a race car driver, this particular scene asks an important question: Who is this man? Who is the man we call Jesus? It is important that we, as Christians, answer this question honestly to ourselves. So who is this man? Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? Is he just a prophet? Is he just a teacher? Or is he as Peter confessed the Messiah, the Son of God, the Christ? We as Christians need to answer this question especially living in the secular world we live in today.

My friends, along with Peter and the other disciples, I myself place my trust and faith in Christ's hands as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Jesus did, does, and will continue to do amazing things on the planet through His Holy and Wondrous Spirit. He will continue to work through all of us to change this world into his Kingdom. He will work through us to become the kingdom raisers he wants us to be. See, with all of these temptations we have nothing to worry about because we have a new creation inside of us. This man we talk about all the time, the Son of Man, the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the Messiah, has made us a new creation in his name and gives us the power and the honor to go and make disciples of all nations in the name of him. When we accept Christ as the Savior of the World we threw away our old life, that part of us died, but a new creation was born inside of us; a creation that is able to withstand all the weeds of the flesh. We were washed, sanctified, and justified in the Name of Jesus.

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So my friends, with all the weeds that we have distracting us from the one we are crazy in love with, who is the man we call Jesus? Is he just a prophet? Is he just a teacher? Is he a politician? Is he just crazy person who is seeking attention? Or is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, truly the messiah? Who is he in your life? Surely I tell you the truth; He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In our bible study we had this past Wednesday, we studied in detail the prayer Jesus had at Gethsemane right before his crucifixion. By studying the prayer you could see and almost feel the anxiety that He was feeling out of fear of the cross. See, Jesus was born human, he was a teacher, he was a prophet, he may have been a politician, and I'm sure at times his disciples thought he was crazy, but He was born from God. He was God who came into human form to witness what living in the world was all about. God came to earth as human to feel the pain, the agony, the happiness, the love, the comfort, the eagerness, the anger, the jealousy, the excitement of what it is to be human, he came to let us know that he understands what we are going through. And most importantly he came to earth to give us a gift we cannot afford to live without; he gave us his life so we may spend eternity with him in heaven.

Shout out the name of the one you love. Tell the world, the world who asks who this man is, tell them who he is, tell them that he is Jesus, the risen King, the risen Lord, the Living Son of Man.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT
AMEN.