

Wheat and Tares: The Dividing Line Is Already Being Drawn

The Church in every generation prays for renewal, yet renewal in Scripture rarely arrives without refinement. We ask for awakening, authority, and a greater manifestation of God's power. Let's look at this first: Before the Lord enlarges influence, He examines foundations. Before He entrusts weight, He reveals what can sustain it. What we often interpret as delay is frequently preparation.

In Matthew 13, Jesus describes a field where wheat and tares grow together until the harvest. The servants, unsettled by the mixture, want immediate separation. The master refuses. Both must mature. Only then will the difference become unmistakable. Shared soil and shared rain do not guarantee shared nature. Proximity to the things of God is not identical to transformation by the Spirit of God.

The parable is not merely agricultural; it is ecclesiological. Distinction within the visible Church is not an anomaly, but a recurring pattern. Peter writes that judgment begins with the household of God. That statement should not provoke anxiety in those who belong to Christ. It should produce sobriety. The Lord refines what He intends to preserve and clarifies what He intends to entrust.

Throughout Scripture, reduction often precedes authority. Gideon's army was reduced before victory. The wise virgins were distinguished not by enthusiasm, but by oil prepared in private. In John 6, when Jesus spoke words that confronted superficial allegiance, many disciples withdrew. He did not recalibrate the message to protect momentum. He allowed truth to sift the field. When asked whether they, too, would leave, Peter answered with settled conviction that Christ alone held the words of eternal life.



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We should not assume our generation is exempt from similar testing. In recent years, I have watched leaders rise quickly, build influence rapidly, and then fracture under pressures that would not have destabilized earlier generations. Speed can generate visibility without depth. Platforms can expand faster than character forms. What looks stable in momentum often proves fragile under strain.

In the parable, wheat bends under the weight of fruit, while tares remain upright and empty. The image is instructive. Genuine fruit produces humility. Emptiness resists bowing, because it carries nothing to surrender. If distinction becomes clearer in the years ahead, it will revolve less around labels and more around motive. Why do we seek influence? Why do we desire recognition? Why do we measure success the way we do? These questions are not cynical; they are necessary for spiritual integrity.

Paul's reference to Demas is brief but sobering. A coworker once aligned with apostolic labor departed because he loved the present world. Scripture records no dramatic scandal, only a quiet shift in affection. What we love ultimately determines where we remain. Separation often begins internally long before it becomes visible externally.

Jesus warned that many would fall away, yet He emphasized endurance. Endurance is not passive waiting; it is sustained fidelity under strain. It is remaining anchored when alignment carries cost and when compromise appears easier.

If the Lord is clarifying His Church, the proper response is formation, rather than fear. Private communion must deepen beyond habit into dependence. Scripture must shape instinct, not merely inform argument. Offense must be addressed quickly, because resentment clouds discernment. Motives must be

examined honestly, recognizing how easily ambition can cloak itself in spiritual language.

Biblical reduction is not defeat. When numbers decreased around Gideon and around Jesus, authenticity increased. Harvest does not diminish a field arbitrarily; it gathers what is real and separates what only resembled it. The Lord is not shrinking His Church. He is strengthening it at the root, so that what remains can bear weight.

Seasons of distinction are rarely comfortable, but they are necessary for maturity. A Church refined through testing carries authority differently than one sustained by momentum alone. The coming separation should not be read as decline, but as preparation. In Scripture, maturity precedes inheritance, and refinement precedes entrusted glory.

In the end, it is not visibility that determines permanence, but substance.

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