

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Did Your Conversion Really Take?

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

1 The date was August 14th, 2008. The location was Beijing, Peoples Republic of China. The occasion was the 2008 Summer Olympics. The event was the 100 Meter Butterfly swimming event.

He was Michael Phelps who was defeated by Serbian/American Milorad Cavic in the preliminary heats and the semi finals.

The main event for the Butterfly became one of those “sitting on the edge of your bench” experiences. At the finish Michael beat Milorad by one, one hundredth of a second! The time was challenged but eventually confirmed. Michael won his seventh gold metal.

Both swimmers competed again in future events. Michael eventually accumulated a total of twenty-eight metals making him the most decorated Olympic athlete in history. But none of his future challenges was as exciting as the Butterfly in Beijing in 2008.

Your conversion to the Lord can be as exciting and life changing for you as that event in China. **Did your**

conversion to the Lord really take? Is it really making the changes in your life that God intended for it to make? ²

Let's first examine Matthew, chapter 13, verses 24 through 30. Jesus told them another parable: "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?' ³ "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.'" ⁴

Then, the Lord explains His story in verses 36 through 43, Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. 5

“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. 6

Notice the cast in the Parable of the Weeds. In verse 24, **the kingdom of heaven** are truly converted Christians; the church. ¹ ₇

In verse 37, **the sower** is the Son of Man, Lord Jesus. ² ₈ In verse 38, **The field** is the world ⁹ and **the good seed** are “the sons of the kingdom”; ³ truly converted Christians. They have surrendered their lives to the Lord’s control and are growing in their relationship to Him. ₁₀

Also in verse 38 we have **the weeds**. These are labeled “the sons of the evil one”. ⁴ I believe this refers to the unregenerate church attender! I will explain why I believe this later. ₁₁

In verse 39 **the enemy** is described as the devil. ⁵ ₁₂

¹ Matthew 13:24 - The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

² Matthew 13:37 - The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

³ Matthew 13:38 - The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom.

⁴ Matthew 13:38 - The weeds are the sons of the evil one . . .

⁵ Matthew 13:39 - . . . the enemy who sows them is the devil.

Also in verse 39, **the harvest** is “the end of the age”, the Judgment Day ¹³ and **the harvesters** are the angels. ⁶

When it comes to eternal salvation in heaven, some feel that if they simply go through the right forms, do the right things, believe the right stuff and affiliate with the right organization - they're in!

But, true conversion is where your heart and your character begin to change. You are “born again”. You are to become a different person than you were before. You acquire new relationships and you begin behaving differently. ¹⁴

So, what should you expect to see when a true conversion happens? ¹⁵

What should happen . . .

⁶ Matthew 13:39 - The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

I. At Your Conversion

At your conversion?

The gun sounds and Michael dives into the water! ¹⁶

In verse 24 we have the **good seed**; the truly converted Christians. ¹⁷ Are you truly obedient to God's will? Are you fully committed to the Lord Jesus? Let's see some of the features, the Bible says, should be in your life. ¹⁸

Repentance: ⁷ means you have a changed mind about your past sinful life. Luke, chapter 13, verse 3, . . . **unless you repent, you too will all perish.** ¹⁹

Confessed sin: ⁸ means to admit sins in your life you are aware of before a Holy God. First John, chapter 1, verse 9, **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** ²⁰

⁷ μετανοέω.

⁸ ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν.

The Good Confession: ⁹ is the understanding that Jesus is the Son of God and the Lord of your life. ¹⁰ First Timothy, chapter 6, verses 12 and 13, **Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses . . . and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession . . .** ²¹

Baptism: ¹¹ is not just the physical ceremony of being immersed in water but that your life fits in with its symbolism of leaving the old life for the new one. Romans, chapter 6, verse 4 pictures this, **We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead**

⁹ τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν.

¹⁰ Matthew 16:16 - Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." - Acts 8:37 - Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." - Romans 10:9-10 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

¹¹ βαπτίζω.

through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.²²

Good wheat reproduces itself in abundance. The church grows as you share your total life message!²³

In contrast to this, we find in verse 25, **the weeds**. I consider this to be the unregenerate church attender.

²⁴

Weeds¹² were the “bearded darnel”; a poisonous rye with roots which creep under and intertwine with the roots of the good wheat.

Even though you may go through the rituals of the Christian life and worship, you never really show the sacrificial life God intended for you!²⁵ Romans, chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, **Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed**

¹² ζιζάνιον.

by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. ²⁶

The Apostle James asked and answered very important questions about genuine faith, **What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.** ¹³

Can others actually see a changed life in you? ²⁷

Next, what should happen . . .

¹³ James 2:14-17.

II. During Your Life

During your life?

Michael swims each lap, straining every muscle, for all he's worth! ²⁸

Notice in verse 26, ¹⁴ **the good seed always bears fruit!** Verse 8 says it is usually very plentiful, **Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.** ²⁹

There's the fruit of Christian growth which is active resistance against Satan. ³⁰ You do this by putting on the full armor of God. ¹⁵ ³¹

There's also the fruit of Christian testimony. Your testimony is displayed in your preparation to share it

¹⁴ Matthew 13:26 - When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

¹⁵ Ephesians 6:13-17 - Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

as a way of life. First Peter, chapter 3, verse 15 describes it this way, **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** ³²

Lord Jesus mentioned that He will return as a king someday. He will divide His people into two categories; those who come into His presence and receive their inheritance and those He discards into the eternal fire prepared for the devil.

The people in the different groups put themselves into those categories by the way their faith was displayed. Those who's conversions took expressed their faith by helping others who had needs they addressed. Those who's conversions didn't take neglected the needs of those around them. ¹⁶ ₃₃

Then, there's the fruit of the Spirit that begins appearing in your life. Galatians, chapter 5, verses 22 and 23 give us a partial list of this fruit, **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,**

¹⁶ Matthew 25:31-46

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Against such things there is no law. ³⁴

In verse 26, **the weeds just appear.** ¹⁷ ³⁵

One of Satan's purposes is to encourage church attenders to remain untransformed! Weeds are distinguished from good wheat by the fruit they bear. Untransformed church attenders discourage prospects for salvation by their worldly attitudes. ³⁶

Verse 29, states if these weeds are pulled up while growing in the field good wheat would be damaged as well since their roots are so intertwined. ¹⁸ When hypocrites do damage in the church the temptation is to get rid of them anyway you can. But this can result in church splits, conflict and dissention. When Christians act in very un-Christian ways it results in a worse testimony to the non-Christian world than just letting them remain. ³⁷

¹⁷ Matthew 13:26 - When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

¹⁸ Matthew 13:28-29 - "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.'"

God's way, in verse 30,¹⁹ is to **let both grow together until the harvest**. We are to let the angels do the separating, not us!³⁸

So, what are our responsibilities towards the hypocrites in the church? Warn them in love and encourage them to change as urgently as you can!

During the Franco-German War two unexploded shells fell close to a house near the battle. After the conflict the owner of the house took them inside, polished them up and put them on each side of the fireplace hearth.

One day a friend stopped by to visit and noticed these beautiful articles of furniture. The owner explained the story and the visitor responded in horror! "Get these artillery shells out of the house away from the fire!" he

¹⁹ Matthew 13:30 - 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.

yelled. “They are just as deadly as the day they were made!” ²⁰

There’s an urgency here! Pray for them and warn them to change quickly before the angels get them! ³⁹

Finally, what should happen . . .

III. When the Judgment Comes

When the judgment comes.

Michael strains for the last stroke and touches the finish plate. The buzzer sounds as he beats Milorad Cavic by just one, one hundredth of a second! Whew!

40

What happens to the weeds? Verse 42 says that they are gathered and burned. ²¹ ₄₁

God knows your heart. He knows if you are genuine or not. You can fool anyone else, but not Him!

²⁰ Our Daily Bread, “The Danger of Unbelief”, February 23.

²¹ Matthew 13:42 - They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The weeping and gnashing of teeth is found four other times in the Lord's parables. ⁴² The healing of the Centurion's servant where entrenched church people failed to exhibit faith. ²² ⁴³ The parable of the wedding banquet when someone tried to sneak in uninvited. ²³ ⁴⁴ The parable of the servant who neglected his responsibilities while his master was away. ²⁴ ⁴⁵ In the parable of the talents addressing the unfaithful servant. ²⁵ ⁴⁶

What happens to the good wheat? Verse 30 and verse 43 tell us that the good wheat will be gathered into the master's barn; heaven! ⁴⁷

Lord Jesus personally told us what He was going to do for us. **Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and**

²² Matthew 8:10-12.

²³ Matthew 22:1-14.

²⁴ Matthew 24:45-51.

²⁵ Matthew 25:30.

prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ²⁶ ₄₈

Revelation, chapter 21, verses 1 through 4 give us a picture of that place. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” . ₄₉

Are you the wheat or the weed? Are you the good seed or the bad? Do you have the Spirit controlled life or are you the hypocrite?

²⁶ John 14:1-3.

When Lord Jesus ascends from the clouds will He say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master”? Or, will He say, “Depart from Me. I never knew you”?

The difference is what you decide to do with Lord Jesus right now!

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