CRESTVIEW
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**October 4, 2026**

**WORSHIP NOTES**

**The Kingdom of God: Secrets**

**Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43**

**ON-LINE INTRO**
**WELCOME VIDEO**

**PREPARATION MUSIC** ***I Sing the Mighty Power of God*** Teri McKibben
Rodney Barbour

**I sing the mighty power of God**
**that made the mountains rise,**
**that spread the flowing seas abroad**
**and built the lofty skies.**
**I sing the wisdom that ordained**
**the sun to rule the day;**
**the moon shines full at his command,**
**and all the stars obey.**

Isaac Watts's hymn "I Sing the Mighty Power of God" and **Psalm 78** both celebrate the absolute sovereignty, creative power, and sustaining providence of God, though they approach the theme from different angles—creation praise versus redemptive history.

## Thematic Connections

- **God's Sovereign Command Over Nature:**
  - *Hymn:* Watts writes that the moon and stars obey God's command, and "tempests blow, by order from thy throne".
  - *Psalm 78:* Psalm 78 recounts God's physical and natural dominion over the elements during the Exodus, noting how He split the sea, guided His people by a cloud by day, and caused the east wind to blow in the wilderness (Psalm 78:13, 14, 26).
- **Provision and Sustenance:**
  - *Hymn:* Verse 2 praises God as the one "who filled the earth with food" and cares for all living things.

    - *Psalm 78:* A major motif of Psalm 78 is God's physical provision for Israel in the desert, where He rained down manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven (Psalm 78:24).
- **The Creator and Maker:**
    - *Hymn:* Watts opens by praising God as the architect of the mountains, seas, and skies.
    - *Psalm 78:* As part of Israel's foundational heritage, God is acknowledged as the Maker who established the earth and set its enduring boundaries.

## Distinct Emphases

- "**I Sing the Mighty Power of God**" is a general hymn of **adoration and natural theology**. It looks outward at the created order—plants, flowers, sun, and stars—to marvel at God's immediate, intimate presence in everyday nature.
- **Psalm 78** is a **didactic historical psalm** (a *Maskil* of Asaph) that looks backward at human failure and covenant faithfulness. It uses God's mighty acts not just to admire the scenery, but to instruct future generations to remember God's works and not rebel like their ancestors.

**WELCOME**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *(from Psalm 78)*

Leader: Give ear, my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

**All: We open our ears and our hearts to God, ready to hear the ancient and enduring truths of His love.**

Leader: I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.

**All: We gather to share in our common history, remembering the mighty works of the Lord.**

Leader: We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done.

**All: Praise be to God for past and present blessings, and for His merciful love that guides every generation. Amen.**

Psalm 78 relates directly to Matthew 13 through Matthew's explicit quotation of **Psalm 78:2** in **Matthew 13:35**, presenting Jesus' use of parables as the fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

## The Prophetic Fulfillment

- **Unveiling hidden truths:** In Matthew 13:34–35, Matthew notes that Jesus spoke to the crowds only in parables to fulfill the words of the psalmist: *"I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world"*.
- **The meaning of "Mashal":** Psalm 78:2 originally uses the Hebrew word *mashal* (translated as parable, proverb, or dark saying) where Asaph recounts Israel's history to instruct future generations. Matthew applies this concept to Jesus, showing that Christ uses earthly stories to reveal deep, previously hidden spiritual mysteries concerning the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Thematic Connections to the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43)

- **Instruction and legacy:** Psalm 78 emphasizes passing down the vital, foundational truths of God to make sure the next generation understands God's ways. Similarly, Jesus transitions away from the crowds to privately instruct His disciples, interpreting the hidden meaning of the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds so they grasp the reality of final judgment.
- **Separation of the righteous and rebellious:** Psalm 78 details a historical record of Israel's persistent spiritual rebellion alongside God's enduring patience and ultimate judgment. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares echoes this exact dynamic on a cosmic scale—showing how the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one coexist in the world now, pending a final, decisive separation and judgment at the end of the age.

**HYMN OF RESPONSE** ***All People That on Earth Do Dwell***

**3. O enter then his gates with praise,**
**Approach with joy his courts unto;**
**Praise, laud, and bless his name always,**
**For it is seemly so to do.**

**4. For why? The Lord our God is good;**
**His mercy is forever sure;**
**His truth at all times firmly stood,**
**And shall from age to age endure.**

**The verses of this hymn connect to today's passage in Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 through themes of divine ownership, the scope of God's creation, and the ultimate destiny of humanity. The hymn provides a portrait of humanity's ideal relationship with its Maker, whereas Jesus' parable explains the reality of living in a compromised world and the final execution of that divine ownership.**

**SONG OF PRAISE** ***Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)***

**Alleluia**
**Alleluia**
**For the Lord God Almighty reigns**

**Alleluia**
**Alleluia**
**For the Lord God Almighty reigns**

**Alleluia**
**Holy**
**Holy are You Lord God Almighty**
**Worthy is the Lamb**
**Worthy is the Lamb**

**You are holy**
**Holy are You Lord God Almighty**
**Worthy is the Lamb**
**Worthy is the Lamb**
**Amen.**

**Alleluia**
**Alleluia**
**For the Lord God Almighty reigns**

**Alleluia**
**Alleluia**
**For the Lord God Almighty reigns**

**Alleluia**
**Holy**
**Holy are You Lord God Almighty**
**Worthy is the Lamb**
**Worthy is the Lamb**

**You are holy**
**Holy are You Lord God Almighty**
**Worthy is the Lamb**
**Worthy is the Lamb**
**Amen.**

**Holy**
**You are Holy. You are Lord God Almighty**
**Worthy is the Lamb**

**Worthy is the Lamb**

**Amen.  Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen**

The lyrics from Agnus Dei connect with the overarching themes of sovereignty, final judgment, and the ultimate victory of God found in the Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). While *Agnus Dei* draws its direct vocabulary from the heavenly worship scenes in Revelation, it serves as the exact "sonic response" to the fulfillment of Jesus' parable.
The connections converge across three core theological pillars:

## 1. The Proclamation of Divine Sovereignty

- **The Lyric:** *"Alleluia, Alleluia, For the Lord God Almighty reigns"*
- **The Connection:** In Matthew 13:24-30, the field owner (representing the Son of Man) displays absolute control despite an enemy's active infiltration. When his servants panic over the weeds growing alongside the wheat, the master calmly instructs them to wait, knowing exactly how and when he will settle the issue. The repetitive declaration in *Agnus Dei* that God "reigns" mirrors this reality: even when evil and righteousness coexist confusingly in the world, the Sovereign Sower remains firmly in control.

## 2. The Separation at the End of the Age

- **The Lyric:** *"Holy, Holy, Are You Lord God, Almighty"*
- **The Connection:** Jesus explains in Matthew 13:41-43 that at the harvest (the end of the age), the Son of Man will send his angels to weed out everything that causes sin and all who do evil. Once the unholy elements are purged, *"the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."* The song's heavy emphasis on God's holiness underscores the exact standard by which this final, necessary separation occurs.

## 3. The Ultimate Exaltation of the Sower

- **The Lyric:** *"Worthy is the Lamb... Amen"*
- **The Connection:** In the parable's explanation, Jesus reveals that He Himself is the Sower (*"The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man"*). He is the one who initiates the kingdom, protects the crop, directs the angels, and owns the final "barn." *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God") shifts focus directly to this Sower, exalting Jesus as the triumphant Lamb who is fully worthy to bring about God's grand plan of sorting, redemption, and eternal peace.

Ultimately, while the Matthew 13 passage describes the messy, earthly tension of living among "weeds," *Agnus Dei* provides the victory song sung once that tension is forever resolved at the harvest.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Leader: Merciful God, you plant each of us like seeds in the same field, and together we are nourished and nurtured by your love. When we are quick to label others as good or bad rather than accept them as your creation, forgive us.

**ALL: When we try to play the harvester, wanting to uproot those we believe do not belong, forgive us.**

Leader: When we forget that we are a complex mixture of wheat and weeds, and refuse to look honestly at our own shortcomings, forgive us.

**All: When we deprive others of the grace and space to grow toward what you call them to be, forgive us.**

- **Playing the Harvester:** The confession states, *"When we try to play the harvester, wanting to uproot those we believe do not belong, forgive us."* This reflects the servants in the parable who prematurely ask if they should gather up the weeds. Humans often want to judge and eject others right away, but Jesus reserves final judgment for God and His angels at the end of the age.
- **The Mixture of Wheat and Weeds:** The confession acknowledges, *"When we forget that we are a complex mixture of wheat and weeds, and refuse to look honestly at our own shortcomings, forgive us."* This aligns with the reality that the field contains both, and people are quick to see flaws in others while ignoring their own inner moral imperfections.
- **Labeling and Grace:** The lines about being *"quick to label others as good or bad"* and depriving others of *"grace and space to grow"* reflect God's patience in the parable. God allows time and space for growth and transformation, whereas humans often write people off prematurely with rigid labels.

**SILENT PRAYER**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Leader: Hear this good news! The Lord of the harvest is patient and slow to anger, rich in love and faithful to the end. God does not treat us as our sins deserve, nor judge us by our worst days.

**All: In Jesus Christ, the one who sows the good seed, the weeds of our past are gathered up and forgiven. We are completely renewed, chosen, and called to shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father.**

Leader: Believe the gospel and receive this grace…

**All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Amen!**

These words of assurance directly reframe and transform the imagery of Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43 (The Parable of the Weeds) from a warning of final judgment into a message of grace, forgiveness, and hope.

Here is how the text explicitly connects to and reinterprets the scripture:

## 1. The Patience of the Harvest

- **The Scripture:** In Matthew 13:28-29, when the servants ask if they should pull up the weeds immediately, the householder says, *"No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest."*
- **The Assurance:** The liturgy highlights this delay as an act of divine mercy, declaring that **"The Lord of the harvest is patient and slow to anger."** God's refusal to destroy the weeds immediately is framed not as passive waiting, but as patient grace giving humanity time to turn to Him.

## 2. Changing the Nature of the "Weeds"

- **The Scripture:** In the parable's explanation, Jesus states that the weeds are "the children of the evil one" (v. 38) and are ultimately thrown into the furnace to be burned (v. 42).
- **The Assurance:** The liturgy beautifully shifts the definition of "weeds." Instead of identifying *people* as weeds destined for destruction, it states that **"the weeds of our past are gathered up and forgiven."** Through Jesus, the "weed" is no longer the person, but the person's past sins and worst days.

## 3. The Role of Jesus as the Sower

- **The Scripture:** Jesus explains that *"The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man"* (v. 37).
- **The Assurance:** The liturgy echoes this directly, addressing **"Jesus Christ, the one who sows the good seed."** It anchors the congregation's identity in being the "good seed" planted by Christ, rather than the weeds sown by the enemy.

## 4. Glowing in the Kingdom

- **The Scripture:** The parable concludes with a promise: *"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father"* (v. 43).
- **The Assurance:** The liturgy uses this exact wording to declare a present and future reality for the believer: **"We are completely renewed, chosen, and called to shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father."**
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## Summary of the Theological Shift

While Matthew 13 emphasizes judgment, separation, and consequences, the words of assurance focus on the **transformative grace** available before the harvest. It assures the congregation that because of Jesus, their "worst days" do not define their final destiny.

**SONG OF PRAISE***(381)* ***Come, Ye Thankful People, Come***

**1 Come, ye thankful people, come;**
**raise the song of harvest home.**
**All is safely gathered in**
**ere the winter storms begin.**
**God, our maker, does provide**
**for our wants to be supplied;**
**come to God's own temple, come,**
**raise the song of harvest home.**

**2 All the world is God's own field,**
**fruit unto his praise to yield,**
**wheat and tares together sown,**
**unto joy or sorrows grown.**
**First the blade, and then the ear,**
**then the full corn shall appear,**
**Lord of harvest, grant that we**
**wholesome grain and pure may be.**

**3 For the Lord our God shall come**
**and shall take his harvest home,**
**from his field shall in that day**
**all offenses purge away,**
**give his angels charge at last**
**in the fire the tares to cast,**
**but the fruitful ears to store**
**in his garner evermore.**

**4 Even so, Lord, quickly come**
**to your final harvest home,**
**gather all your people in,**
**free from sorrow, free from sin,**
**there, forever purified,**
**in your presence to abide.**
**Come, with all your angels, come,**
**raise the glorious harvest home.**

The hymn closely parallels the themes of Matthew 13 across its subsequent verses, connecting earthly agriculture with spiritual truths:

- **The Field and Coexistence (Matthew 13:24, 37–38):** Both the biblical passage and the second verse of the hymn describe the world as God's field where righteous "wheat" and unrighteous "tares" coexist during the present age. You can find the full text of verse 2 referencing the world's field and the sown wheat and tares in the referenced source.

- **Spiritual Growth (Matthew 13:30):** The hymn traces crop development ("first the blade, and then the ear") to mirror spiritual maturation, turning the process into a prayer for personal purity and wholesome grain.
- **Separation and Judgment (Matthew 13:40–42):** Verse 3 of the hymn closely mirrors Jesus' explanation of the final judgment, referencing the angels, the purging of offenses, the casting of tares into the fire, and the storing of fruitful grain. The full lyrical details can be reviewed in.
- **The Final Gathering (Matthew 13:43):** Concluding with an eschatological prayer, the final verse anticipates Christ's return to gather His purified people into eternal presence, free from sin and sorrow.

## SCRIPTURE AND SERMON

The Kingdom of God: Secrets

Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

**In the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds, Jesus explains that the world is a field where both good people (the children of the kingdom) and evil people (the children of the evil one) must coexist until the end of the age. When an enemy sows weeds among the wheat, the master tells his workers to leave them growing together rather than pulling them early, ensuring the wheat is not damaged. Later, Jesus tells his disciples that the final separation will happen at the harvest—symbolizing the end of the world—when angels will gather evildoers for judgment and the righteous will shine in God's kingdom.**

## SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

### Bread Meditation

**Throughout the whole creation I see God's loving care.**
**For everyone in every land, God's children everywhere.**
**Wherever I may wander, wherever I may be,**
**I'm certain of my Maker's love; God's care is over me.**

- **God's Sovereignty Over Creation:** The hymn views the physical world as evidence of God's active presence. Similarly, Jesus identifies Himself as the owner of the field ("the Son of Man") who rules over the entire harvest of the world.
- **The "Children" of the Kingdom:** The hymn sings of "God's children everywhere" in a universal sense of creation. In Matthew 13:38, Jesus specifically defines the "good seed" as the "children of the kingdom," showing that God's ultimate care centers on those who belong to Him within His planted field.

## Cup Meditation

**This is my Father's world,**
**and to my listening ears all nature sings,**
**and round me rings the music of the spheres.**
**This is my Father's world:**
**I rest me in the thought of rocks and trees, of skies and seas—**
**His hand the wonders wrought.**

- **God's Sovereignty vs. Hidden Evil:** The hymn acknowledges that "wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet". Similarly, Matthew 13 explains that the Son of Man allows the weeds (representing evil/the sons of the evil one) and the wheat (the sons of the kingdom) to grow together in the world until the harvest.
- **Creation and the Harvest:** The hymn looks at nature (rocks, trees, birds, and grass) as a direct reflection of God's handiwork. Matthew 13 uses agricultural imagery—a farmer sowing seed, a field, and a harvest—to describe how God manages and ultimately redeems His creation.
- **The Resolution of Conflict:** The later verses of the hymn speak of a "battle" and a time when earth and heaven become one. This mirrors the conclusion in Matthew 13:43, where the righteous "will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

**SONG OF RESPONSE***(632)* ***The Lord's Prayer***

**Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.**

## Shared Themes

- **The Kingdom of God:** Both texts emphasize the reality and future fulfillment of God's reign, referred to as the "Kingdom of their Father" or the coming of God's kingdom on earth.
- **The Presence of Evil:** The Lord's Prayer acknowledges temptation and the "evil one" (Satan), while the parable explicitly identifies the enemy/devil sowing weeds ("children of the evil one") among the good seed in the world.
- **Patience and Forgiveness:** Commentators note that the restraint urged in the parable—allowing the wheat and weeds to grow together until the harvest rather than acting out in premature judgment—mirrors the forgiving, patient posture taught in the Lord's Prayer.

**BLESSING**

**CLOSING MUSIC** ***The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve***

**We go to be the hands of Christ, to scatter joy like seed,**
**and, all our days, to cherish life, to do the loving deed.**
**Then let us go to serve in peace, the gospel to proclaim.**
**God's Spirit has empowered us, we go in Jesus' name.**

## The Field as the World

- **The Scripture:** Jesus explains that "the field is the world", where both the children of the kingdom (good seed) and children of the evil one (weeds) grow side by side until the harvest.
- **The Hymn:** The hymn opens by noting that The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve means going directly into this real, broken world rather than escaping it. Believers step into the shared "field" of humanity to bring "glad tidings".

## Scattering Seeds of Goodness

- **The Scripture:** The Son of Man sows "good seed" in His field, representing the righteous acts and lives of the children of the kingdom.
- **The Hymn:** Verse 3 explicitly uses agricultural imagery, stating, *"We go to be the hands of Christ, to scatter joy like seed."* Just as the sower introduces good growth into the field, Christians are commissioned by the Spirit to actively counter the enemy's weeds by dropping seeds of joy, love, and life.