

Sermon for the Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

Grace, peace, and mercy from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Last Sunday we heard Jesus tell the parable of the sower. The sower scattered seed abundantly and graciously all over the place. He sowed in places where there would be no hope of a fruit bearing crop in a million years. Yet in His sowing, some of the seeds fell in the good rich soil and produced abundant fruit, the fruit of faith and love. It was an abundant harvest, some 100 fold, some 60, and some 30. His sowing shows us the length that God goes through to build His Church.

This morning in this rich and abundant field of fruit bearing plants we hear Jesus telling us a parable, the parable of the wheat and weeds. We find out that Jesus is not the only one sowing seeds. The devil is also sowing seeds. These seeds as it turns out grows into weeds. Then when we wake up one morning, we discover the bad noxious weeds growing among the good fruit bearing plants. Now we have the good growing with the bad. No surprise there.

Turn on the news, we see it and hear it. Open a newspaper, we read about it. We see it on our own community, whether it be theft, or broken families, or violence. We might cry to the Lord asking why? Do something about this broken, torn apart nation and world. Then we see it in the church. Church leaders who fall into sin that make front page news. We often hear the excuse, perhaps from your friends, why they do not go to church, "The church is full of hypocrites."

Jesus has the answer to the 'why question' for us today in this parable. The answer is quite surprising. God allows the evil to stay, along with the good. God does not allow the weeds to be up rooted. It is not because of a lack of caring on God's part, or even that He is too weak to do anything about, it because He is merciful and full of steadfast love and faithfulness.

I don't know about you, but I have the tendency to think like the servants in the parable. I want the weeds pulled now. I want to get rid of them. I want the world; I want the community to be good. I want the Church and my congregation to be pure and without fault, you know, like the Garden of Eden. But we know what happened there. Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience they got expelled. There is no Garden of Eden.

To get rid of the weeds right now presents us with many problems. The first is that I cannot tell the difference between the good plants and bad plants. One time I planted a garden and tried to pull some weeds. As it turned out I was getting ready to pull a good fruit bearing plant, and what I was willing to keep was a weed. In my judgment I would have pulled the wrong plants. God is merciful, and God knows the good from the bad. God is the judge of all of that. No good plants will be pulled from a mistake when it comes to my judgment.

The second thing, in this field the good and the bad plants are growing so close together that their roots get tangled with one another. Jesus said, in uprooting the weeds you could uproot

the good plants or harm them. Now think with me for a moment. Who are the people in your life who may not be believers, and children of God? Do you want them pulled up right now? Family, friends, co-workers, and even folks you can count on for help for what you need. If they were pulled up in this time what would it mean to you? God is merciful.

Another problem is that in this world there is no way a weed can be transformed into good fruit bearing plant. Not so with God. If you think about it, you are an example of that. You were born by nature a weedy plant. Now you are a faithful plant. Grafted by your baptism into Christ and forgiven of all your weedy ways. No weeds will be given up on too soon.

God is merciful and desires no one to perish into hell. That is why Jesus is telling parables and why He is present today. That His Word, by His Holy Cross He wins for you the forgiveness of your sins. God in Christ will continue to transform weeds into good plants producing the fruit of abiding faith. God is continuing making good out evil. He will continue transforming lives through the power of the gospel. We may not know or even begin to understand the ways of God in our world, or why certain things happen, but we are not to trust in the things and the ways of this world. We are not trust in our own feelings. We are called through the gospel to trust our merciful and loving God. We are to trust in the power of God that through the weakness of the cross the power of God was at work to defeat these powers of evil in this world. Jesus would be uprooted himself to die on the cross for our weedy ways, so that we can become good and fruitful plants. That has been God's plan from the beginning. Do you believe this is for you today?

The time for harvest will come. But not now. It will come at the close of the age. We won't be the reapers or the separators of the weeds and wheat. The angels will have their part. That day is not upon us yet. But I assure you we are closer to it as each hour passes. For now we are placed here, good plants and yes, even bad plants together. To hear the gospel of Christ, pray for transformation in our lives, and in the lives of others, and also growing in faith toward Him who loved us to the end.

Until that time, we wait eagerly longing for the day harvest. When all things will be revealed. Because we are subject to bondage and decay, To suffering and death, The sins that weigh us down, And the attacks of the devil in this weedy world.

But God is merciful. We are not hopeless as we wait for the end when all things will be revealed. We have our baptism. We have the gift of forgiveness. We have the Gospel. And we have each other, the community of faith.

The present time is not worth comparing to what is to come when all things will be reveal and when the paradise of Eden will be restored.

Do not lose hope in this weedy and sinful world. The weeds and the devil will not win. God will have His harvest. In Jesus Christ, Crucified and risen your hope is secure. God has given you His Holy Spirit to be with you now and strengthen as you wait.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, Amen.